

Catullus in Verona

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A Reading of the Elegiac *Libellus*, Poems 65–116

MARILYN B. SKINNER



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D. M.
parentibus carissimis

Edwin John Berglund, 1903–1993
Marie Michalsky Berglund, 1905–1993
hoc vobis quod potui

Ghosts

Those houses haunt in which we leave
Something undone. It is not those
Great words or silences of love

That spread their echoes through a place
And fill the locked-up unbreathed gloom.
Ghosts do not haunt with any face

That we have known; they only come
With arrogance to thrust at us
Our own omissions in a room.

The words we would not speak they use,
The deeds we dared not act they flaunt,
Our nervous silences they bruise;

It is our helplessness they choose
And our refusals that they haunt.

—Elizabeth Jennings

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Preface

Quare, quod scribis Veronae turpe Catullo
esse, quod hic quisquis de meliore nota
frigida deserto tepefactet membra cubili,

id, Manli, non est turpe, magis miserum est. (Catullus 68.27–30)

27 vetone O, corr. O¹ catullo ζ: -e V 29 tepefactet Bergk, -fecit γ, faxit Lachmann:
tepefacit V, al. -factat R² cubilli O 30 manli ε, Ric. 606, malli β, Mani Lachmann,
mi, Alli Schoell: mali V¹

Accordingly, as for your writing that it's “disgraceful” for Catullus to be in Verona, because here anyone who is of the better class habitually warms his chilled limbs in an abandoned bed—that, Manlius [?], is not disgraceful but, instead, sad.

This study is the product of several decades’ engagement not only with Catullus but also, inescapably, with the difficulties of interpreting a badly preserved ancient text. From the time I began serious work on the poems as a doctoral student I have been thinking off and on about the passage above, the most notorious extended *crux* in the entire Catullan corpus.²

Poem 68a is an epistolary *recusatio* in which the speaker denies a request for poetry from a correspondent (variously designated by scholars as Manlius, Manius, Mallius, or Allius) owing to grief over his brother’s recent death. Here, amending a statement purportedly made by that addressee in an earlier letter, he rejects *turpe* as an appropriate word to describe his presence in Verona, substituting *miserum* instead. So much seems clear. Everything else is strenuously contested: the extent of direct quotation from the addressee’s letter, if any; the reference of *hic* in line 28; emendations for V’s unmetrical *tepefacit* in the following line; the implications of the phrase *deserto . . . cubili*.³ Major interpretive issues—including Catullus’ attitude toward the person addressed and, following one line of exegesis, his feelings for his mistress Lesbia—hang on the various ways in which these lines have been construed.

Even as I was grappling with the philological evidence for the first time, I wondered whether larger questions of meaning might be involved here. Was the addressee's comment on Verona to be taken as a joke? If so, what conclusion would an audience be expected to draw from the speaker's blunt correction? In such a context, *miserum* seemed permeated by remorse, perhaps also by nostalgia. Beyond the fact of Catullus' return to northern Italy in the wake of a family tragedy, then, might there be some further element of significance attached to his current sojourn there—as contrasted with Rome, the site, he emphatically insists, of his true *domus* and *sedes* (68.34–35)? In that age of New Criticism, it appeared reasonable to propose that Verona was serving as the “objective correlative” of the speaker's despondent emotional state, a zone of spiritual isolation⁴ barren of creative and erotic pleasure, while far-off Rome, on the other hand, had become in recollection the symbolic center of his lost artistic life (Skinner 1972: 506–7).

Once formulated, that figurative reading of “Verona” and “Rome” as opposing markers of a crisis in poetic subjectivity expanded each time I came back to the elegy. Gradually I perceived its relationship to a broader, more complex theme of artistic commitment subordinated to filial duty, arguably central to 68b as well as to its companion piece 68a. Contemporary readers, in the context of Roman cultural values, might well have interpreted Catullus' return to Verona under the putatively autobiographical circumstances presented in this *recusatio* as a permanent removal: the bereaved speaker had chosen between two lifestyles, acknowledging a primary obligation, as sole surviving son, to take his brother's place in managing the estate and continuing the ancestral lineage.

As I pursued this line of thought, Catullus' reference to a *domus* in Rome, plausibly identifiable with the house lent him by Allius in 68b, acquired self-reflexive nuances. Without losing its overtones of familial stability and its pregnant links to the psychological tensions of the Lesbia cycle,⁵ his Roman *domus* came to represent for me his personal identity as poet, alleged to have perished like his creative inspiration upon his brother's death (*tecum una tota est nostra sepulta domus*, 68.22 and 94). Further reflection raised the question of whether this complex of meanings surrounding the *domus* should be extended more widely—initially to the situation of the speaker in poem 65, another *recusatio* related thematically to 68a, and then, through programmatic assertions made in 65, to all Catullan elegy. For I had already begun to think of 65 through 116, the complete group of poems in elegiac meter, as a *libellus* arranged by the author himself, which had once circulated independently before it came to occupy its present position at the end of the *liber Catulli*. On that

hypothesis, the elegiac collection would have been released to the public after Catullus' return to Verona as a valedictory to his public and a retrospective pronouncement upon his completed body of work.⁶

Like some other books brought forth at the end of a poetic career,⁷ this *libellus* theoretically could have been framed as a strong affirmation of art, a testimony to the expansion of humanistic awareness rendered by the poetic product as well as the aesthetic pleasure it affords. That would surely have been motive enough for compiling it, and poem 68 has in fact lent itself to such a reading. Catullus' elegies and epigrams, however—at least as I have now come to understand them—seem instead to enact throughout, and sometimes openly to profess, a deep unease over the representational claims of poetry, its promise of immortality, and, even more, its fundamental truth value. Perhaps such misgivings are not uncommon in a literature informed by absence; certainly the poignancy of Ovid's exilic elegy is underscored by tensions between the speaker's stubborn faith in verse as a medium of self-expression and his ostensible anxiety about the deterioration of his skills. Political turmoil at Rome in the late 50s B.C.E. may have affected the mood of Catullus' collection, as it palpably shaped the content, eliciting a sense of inarticulate helplessness in the face of external events. In similar fashion, T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*, also composed in a time of war, obsessively interrogate the efficacy of language: "words strain, / crack and sometimes break, under the burden" ("Burnt Norton"). Aware on looking back of what his craft had apparently failed to accomplish, the poet in representing the very experience of creative defeat could have sought one last time to get it right. "Many aging poets require that form of liberation," notes Lawrence Lipking. "Before they take leave of their ghosts, they must put their affairs in order" (67). The speaker who corrects his correspondent's flip remark at 68.27–30 is not old, but he already thinks of his youth as vanished. And he is taking leave of many things, ghosts among them.

During the same period in which I was reaching such conclusions, fellow classicists were making corroborative discoveries. Observing the emphasis in all three texts, 65, 68a, and 68b, upon poetry's conditions of production and commemorative uses, several attributed that intensified artistic self-consciousness to Callimachean influence, which had prompted a radical "exploration of the parameters of creativity" (Hunter 182).⁸ Fraternal grief would have precipitated a change in the author's sensibility and the corresponding development of a more melancholy textual voice (Block 48). In a procession of poetic statements emulating the format of Callimachus' *Aetia*, the gradual emergence of that voice also furnishes an "aetiology" for the bleakness of the elegiac epigrams, largely concerned with faithlessness and public misconduct (King 390–92).⁹ Recently it has been suggested that the poems in elegiacs are infused with a tension between the high Roman

valuation of marriage and family as institutions and the private relationship between the speaker and his mistress—a primarily sexual liaison, yet one in which the speaker nevertheless demands of his partner a quasi-spousal fidelity (Holzberg 55). I firmly agree with all of those perceptions, but my interpretation goes to greater lengths. Preoccupied not only with death and erotic betrayal, as is evident, but also with the futility of an artistic vocation, the thematics of the *libellus* are to me even more darkly introspective than others have found them. Tracing out those thematics, as they are disclosed through serial reading of the textual sequences composing the elegiac *libellus*, is consequently my present objective.

When I do so, the reader, finding the word “I” turning up more often than is wont in academic prose, will suspect that the authorial self-consciousness in this autobiographical preface (where by convention it is permitted) has relentlessly seeped into the entire argument. Correct, and there are reasons why. Those who bear in mind that my current views evolved over many years, during which the discipline, along with the entire field of humanities, witnessed a major paradigm shift, may be in a better position to sympathize with unvoiced assumptions about the contingency and “embeddedness” of all critical practice.¹⁰ Again, I am making no claim that the interpretation of the *libellus* put forth in this monograph is exhaustive. My investigative goal does not extend beyond the production of a *plausible* reading of these poems as a unit, a reading that tries to remain faithful to my understanding of Roman cultural mores even as it attempts to account for the presence of textual and structural features in keeping with accepted standards of expository proof. Saying “I” at regular intervals should be a helpful reminder that I am only telling a “story of reading.”¹¹ Lastly, the recurrent presence of the *biographème*—Roland Barthes’ term for an extraneous factual detail that seemingly connects head-on with the uniqueness of the now long-dead author—has, as I will argue, a signifying function in such a presumably “confessional” elegiac collection. What I consequently address is the peculiar degree to which the “Catullus” of the scholarly imagination hovers, as a construct, halfway between fiction and historiography. If a few *biographèmes* of my own are sprinkled through this monograph, it is to indicate that clues to the author’s one-time presence dropped by the authorial persona may be vehicles of genuine insight. Or they may be red herrings.

In any case, I hope that the hermeneutic self-appraisal demanded by the irruption of poststructuralist theory into our discipline will have led to a productive reconsideration of two tried and true philological questions—the unity, coherence, and ultimate meaning of Catullus 68 and the likelihood of authorial editorship for the Catullan corpus. It is worth bringing contemporary models of analysis to bear on old issues, if only to test the applicability of the former and the ongoing relevance of the latter.

Acknowledgments

During so many years of working with Catullus' poetry, I have benefited from an extraordinary amount of professional and personal generosity. I cannot possibly express my gratitude to everyone who aided me during the course of my academic career, but let me at least thank the people and institutions who assisted the progress of the book you're now holding. Without their help, it would not be in your hands.

First, I deeply appreciate the enthusiasm with which Eugene O'Connor, Managing Editor of the Ohio State University Press, greeted my proposal and the time he subsequently spent with me discussing how the project might suit his own prospective new list in classical studies. The two referees chosen to review the manuscript brought to the task an impressive expertise in the field. Furthermore, they readily applied the insights gained through their own prior critical engagements with Catullus to refining and strengthening what may have seemed a highly unorthodox argument. My indebtedness to them is manifest throughout.

Let me express my special thanks to the Press copy editor, who gave the manuscript scrupulous attention, and to the production staff for its contributions to the physical appearance of the volume. Once more Jeffrey S. Carnes performed a superior job of indexing; I'm only sorry that it couldn't be done on site.

I am grateful, too, to Matthew S. Santirocco, editor of *Classical World*, for permission to reprint material from my article "Transactions with Catullus," originally published in *CW* 95.4 (2002): 435–38; to David Higham Associates for permission to reprint Elizabeth Jennings' poem "Ghosts" from *New Collected Poems* (Carcanet, 1986); and to the Art Renewal Center and its chairman, Fred Ross, for permission to reproduce the cover image of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema's painting "The Discourse." The Provost's Author Support Fund of the University of Arizona supplied funds to offset fees for use of copyrighted material. I warmly appreciate the assistance tendered by my institution in this and other ways.

I began working on this book during a sabbatical from the University of Arizona from 1995 to 1996 and completed the manuscript in the fall of

2002, partway through another year-long sabbatical. Being able to give all my concentration to it during those two crucial periods was invaluable; I cannot thank the Department of Classics and the College of Humanities enough for that privilege. Having the services of a research assistant during my second sabbatical was also a unique luxury, and I am pleased beyond measure with Holly Cohen's dedication to the project and her willingness to go the extra mile. Undergraduate and graduate students in my courses on the poet at the University of Arizona have constantly kindled my thinking with imaginative questions and observations. (Just to reassure them, none of them was the model for my implied reader.)

The greatest part of my research and writing was conducted at my home institution, whose library staff was always prepared to assist me. Still, a considerable share was done abroad. My warm appreciation to the library staff of the American Academy in Rome for their specialized skills; to Franco Sgariglia, Director of the Intercollegiate Center in Rome, for the Centro's abundant hospitality; and to Mina Sgariglia and *la famiglia Sgariglia* at the Villa Vergiliana in Cuma for providing an idyllic scholarly retreat—and, more important, for being *la bella famiglia Sgariglia*.

Niklas Holzberg did me a great favor by sending me a copy of his monograph *Catull: Der Dichter und sein erotisches Werk* (Munich 2002) before my manuscript was in final form, which allowed me to take several of his thoughts on the poet into account.

Again, my thanks to all those colleagues who listened to presentations based on the work-in-progress and offered suggestions for improvement. Papers later incorporated into the manuscript were delivered at the annual meetings of the Classical Association of the Midwest and South in 1993 and 1994; parts of draft chapters were given at the 1999, 2000, and 2001 annual meetings. During the fall of 1999, an early version of the second chapter was presented to my colleagues at the University of Arizona and also to the Classics Department of Indiana University at the kind invitation of Eleanor Leach. Meeting with Professor Leach's Catullus students the next day was an energizing experience. Paul Allen Miller read another version of the same chapter and provided several cogent critical observations. In the fall of 2000, I shared thoughts on Catullus' poetry as performance script with attendees at the joint meeting of the Classical Association of the Atlantic States, the Pennsylvania Classical Association, and the Philadelphia Classical Society; I am indebted to Judith Hallett for that invitation. Finally, in the spring of 2002, a request to present my ideas on Catullus 68 to a graduate seminar taught by Thomas Hubbard at the University of Texas provoked one more stimulating and lively discussion. (Perhaps I should take it back—all the students who ever exchanged ideas with me about Catullus went into the making of that implied reader.)

Lastly, a very special thank-you to Madeleine Henry of Iowa State University, though she may not remember why. In an e-mail back in 1995, just when I was first realizing the hopeless magnitude of the project I'd undertaken, she wrote, "I can't wait for *Catullus in Verona*!" That endorsement kept me going through the first and second chapters. Mady, you've waited a long time: here it is.

INTRODUCTION



The Hermeneutics of the Libellus

Under the lingering influence of nineteenth-century Romanticism and its cult of artistic genius, and in the absence of much factual information about the author, the charisma of “Catullus,” the voice heard in the Catullan corpus, brought into being a void demanding to be filled by speculation if nothing else. In 1862 Ludwig Schwabe rose to the occasion. Scrutinizing the poems for biographical content, he produced a *Catullroman* accepted unconditionally by many later readers.¹ This is the familiar story of the talented young provincial C. Valerius Catullus, born in 87 B.C.E., who becomes entangled with the beautiful but vicious noblewoman Clodia, wife of Q. Caecilius Metellus Celer (*pr.* 63, *cos.* 60) and afterward the mistress of M. Caelius Rufus, among others. Catullus’ affair with her, which began a year or two before her husband’s demise (c. 83), enjoyed a period of happiness (cc. 2, 3, 5, 7, etc.) interrupted by his brother’s unexpected death in Asia Minor. Upon his return to Rome from Verona, relations became strained, as Clodia had meanwhile taken other lovers (a large number of Lesbia epigrams; attacks on Gellius, Caelius Rufus, Egnatius); a brief reconciliation (cc. 107, 109) was followed by a final rupture in 58 B.C.E. (c. 76). From 57 to 56 the poet served in Bithynia as a member of the *cohors* of its governor, C. Memmius (cc. 4, 10, 46, 101). While he was abroad, Cicero in defending Caelius on criminal charges had laid bare the extent of Clodia’s depravity, and her public infamy put the last touches on Catullus’ disillusionment (c. 58). Her offer to resume the liaison, conveyed through her intermediaries Furius and Aurelius, provoked a violent denunciation (c. 11); mention of Caesar’s invasion of Britain dates it to 55, approximately a year before the poet’s own death. Into that temporal framework Schwabe then fitted the remaining texts, with varying degrees of plausibility.²

This reconstruction, which, with occasional modifications, underlay Catullan criticism for generations, has now been displaced from its

supporting position. Contemporary scholarship instead stresses both the scarcity of our information and its tenuous nature. Suetonius would have included a life of Catullus in his *De viris illustribus*, but all that remains are two fragments extracted by Jerome and inserted into his expansion of Eusebius' *Chronicle*.³ Under his entry for 87 B.C.E., Jerome writes *Gaius Valerius Catullus scriptor lyricus Veronae nascitur* ("Gaius Valerius Catullus, writer of lyric, is born at Verona") and under 58 B.C.E. he puts the corresponding entry, *Catullus XXX aetatis anno Romae moritur* ("Catullus dies in his thirtieth year [or, "at the age of thirty"] in Rome"). The year given for Catullus' death is incorrect, because, as indicated above, internal references in the poems establish that he was certainly alive in 55 B.C.E. and even later.⁴ Wiseman (1985: 188) thinks the latest assignable date in the corpus is August 54, for Calvus' prosecution of Vatinius (53.2–3). Arguably, this terminus could be pushed down to December of the same year, since poem 14, purportedly sent to Calvus around the time of the Saturnalia, also alludes to Vatinius' enmity (*odio Vatiniiano*, 14.3). However, Calvus' plans to prosecute Vatinius were already a matter of public knowledge in 56, so bad feelings between the two men may well have existed much earlier.⁵

Jerome's inaccuracy about the date of death has called all his other facts into question. One hypothesis is that Suetonius gave only Catullus' age at death; both the birth and death dates consequently involve mere guesswork on Jerome's part (Wiseman 1985: 190; Thomson 1997: 3–4). However, the truth of the claim that the poet died *XXX aetatis anno* is itself not irrefutable: numbers in ancient manuscripts are easily misread or subject to textual corruption. While the brevity of Catullus' life seems to be supported by testimony from Ovid that he died young, the latter evidence may be misleading. At *Amores* 3.9.61–62, Catullus is pictured in Elysium, youthful temples (*iuvenalia . . . tempora*) crowned with poetic ivy; but Romans could refer to a man in his forties as technically a *iuvenis*, and Ovid, who of all Roman authors was most conscious of the artificiality of the poetic persona, may be speaking only of the character projected in the *liber Catulli*.⁶ The fact of the matter is that we have no reliable external evidence for Catullus' life span, save only Nepos' confirmation that he was dead by 32 B.C.E. (*Att.* 12.4). While the absence of any comment on political events at Rome later than 54 has been thought to point to the poet's death shortly thereafter, such a silence can be accounted for in other ways.

Although Catullus' verse seems intensely subjective in its frank censure of leading personalities and observations regarding the current political and social scene, it tells us surprisingly little about its author. There is no reason to doubt his military service in Bithynia under Memmius, alluded

to in poems 10, 28, 31, and 46. In 44 he speaks of a *suburbana villa* ambiguously located between fashionable Tibur and the rural Sabine district; the garrulous pleasure-yacht conjured up in 4 may or may not have been imaginary. His involvement with Lesbia might have been deemed a literary affair, on a par with the conventional romances of Hellenistic epigram, were it not that poem 79 flatly identifies her as a sister of the politician P. Clodius Pulcher.⁷ He mourns his brother's death and burial in the far-off Troad (65, 68a–b, 101); we have no idea where that tragedy fits into the chronology, though the relative scarcity of references may indicate that it occurred only shortly before the elegiac *libellus* was compiled. Finally, it is surprising, but true, that *all* the securely datable poems in the corpus, a total of fourteen or fifteen, must be assigned to the period between 56 and 54 B.C.E.⁸ This should not be taken to mean that the entire *liber Catulli* was composed during such a short length of time—the artistic sophistication of poems 11 and 45, both belonging to that phase, points to a long apprenticeship, and the studied brilliance of poem 64 surely demanded extensive polishing.⁹ It does suggest, however, that Catullus' working life at Rome was relatively brief, and that poems that do not involve mention of events in the capital may well have been composed elsewhere.

One last fact about Catullus' life preserved by an external source is his reconciliation with Caesar, as recounted by Suetonius (*Iul.* 73): *Valerium Catullum, a quo sibi versiculis de Mamurra perpetua stigmata imposita [Caesar] non dissimulaverat, satis facientem eadem die adhibuit cenae hospitioque patris eius, sicut consuerat, uti perseveravit* ("While not denying that Valerius Catullus had set a permanent mark of shame upon him by his lampoons about Mamurra, Caesar, when Catullus apologized, invited him to dinner that same day and continued to enjoy the hospitality of Catullus' father, as he was in the habit of doing"). A great deal of useful information is packed into this single sentence. In the first place, we learn that Catullus' invective verse had been circulating widely enough in Rome to come to Caesar's attention while he campaigned in Gaul. Second, we have a window of opportunity for the apology itself: it must have taken place while Catullus was at home in Cisalpine Gaul and Caesar was wintering there, sometime between late 55 and early 52 B.C.E. Third, we find out that Catullus' father was still alive. Catullus himself would have been a *filiusfamilias* subject to paternal *potestas*, but the difference in attitude between him and his father in respect to Caesar hints tantalizingly at domestic discord.¹⁰ Lastly, we are given invaluable information about the poet's social status. His father was a man of considerable distinction, important enough to host a visiting proconsul, perhaps at the family estate on Sirmio.

Starting from that last piece of evidence, T. P. Wiseman has filled in certain other essential details. Until it acquired full Roman citizenship in 49 B.C.E., Transpadane Gaul possessed only the *ius Latii*. Service on the staff of a provincial governor like Memmius, however, required both citizenship and equestrian status. It is likely that Catullus' father had been an elected magistrate of the colony of Verona, thereby acquiring Roman citizenship *ex officio* for his wife and children (1987: 331). Tenure of Sirmio—and Catullus speaks, in poem 31, as though his family owned the entire peninsula—implies substantial assets. The wealth of the equestrian Valerii Catulli may have been derived from business dealings in Asia and Spain.¹¹ After Catullus' death they continued to prosper, politically as well as financially: two generations afterward, a L. Valerius Catullus was *triumvir monetalis* under Augustus and attained the consulship in Tiberius' reign (31 C.E., *CIL* XIV 2095, 2466). His son was an intimate of Caligula in more than one sense (*Suet. Cal.* 36). When the blind L. Valerius Catullus Messallinus, twice consul, became confidential advisor to the emperor Domitian, the family reached the peak of its fortunes. At some time during the first century C.E., the huge luxury villa at Sirmio familiarly known today as the "Grotte di Catullo" was erected.¹² On the grounds that the edifice was obviously constructed "by someone very high in imperial favour" (349) and that there is no reason to believe Sirmio had fallen into other hands, Wiseman contends that "[w]hether it was himself, his father, or his grandfather who built the villa, Messallinus surely lived in it," and Domitian himself may have stayed there when in northern Italy (359). In succeeding generations, the Valerii Catulli apparently continued to be leading figures at Verona and neighboring Brixia; the last Valerius Catullus is attested in the early third century C.E. (*CIL* V 4484). Given the early extinction of so many aristocratic Roman lines, the tenacious survival of Catullus' family over three centuries is remarkable.

Catullan Editorship

At first glance this project of criticism may seem doggedly conventional in scope and methods, insofar as it takes its point of departure from a long-standing philological uncertainty. Whether Catullus himself arranged his collection of poems in the order in which they have been transmitted to us has been argued back and forth for well over a hundred years.¹³ The existence of poem 1, dedicating a *libellus* to Cornelius Nepos, is *prima facie* evidence that the poet compiled at least some of his verses and presented them in a gift volume. Although the length of the entire corpus, approximately 2400 lines, was long thought to militate against its

being contained on a single roll, fresh papyrus finds have reopened practical consideration of that possibility.¹⁴ Still, the extreme heterogeneity of the collection and its frequent logical displacements create persistent stumbling blocks. For example, chronology is scandalously disrupted when poem 11, bidding Lesbia an irrevocable farewell, is succeeded at length by its companion piece 51, generally ascribed to the earliest stage of the relationship.¹⁵ Other instances of temporal discontinuity occur among the poems in elegiac meter that constitute the third section of the corpus. The great suite of epigrams in which the speaker struggles, more and more desperately, to deal with his mistress' infidelity and his own degrading attachment to her ends on a jarringly upbeat note, first with 107, in which we hear of Lesbia's unexpected return, and then with 109, where her promise of *amor perpetuus*, "everlasting love," is capped by the hopeful proclamation of an *aeternum . . . sanctae foedus amicitiae*, "eternal pact of sacred friendship." Finally, our manuscripts of Catullus terminate with poem 116, whose anomalous status is well described by C. W. Macleod: "[S]ince it seems to explain why Catullus has taken up the pen against Gellius, it has all the air of being a prelude to the other poems directed at him (74, 80, 88–91), and yet it follows them at some distance" (1973: 308). To categorize the piece as an "inverted dedication," Macleod's solution to the puzzle, begs the question of effective placement. Their programmatic overtones notwithstanding, predictions of literary retaliation in 116 are nullified by its very position as last poem, which allows them to fade into silence.

The weight of such aberrations was sufficient to convince Eduardus a Brunér and several generations of readers who followed his lead that a posthumous editor was largely responsible for the present shape of the Catullan collection.¹⁶ That is, if there was any shape at all: a few, like Bernhard Schmidt, went so far as to brand all internal order illusory, proclaiming the *liber Catulli* "ein wüstes Chaos" (278). Most scholars writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, though, took the less radical position that one or more rolls issued by the author had been grievously disarranged, probably when the contents were transferred to codex form. Arthur Leslie Wheeler adopted that stance in his initial Sather Classical Lecture, whose publication in 1934 produced a virtual consensus that the effective absence of coherent authorial design in the extant corpus was a proven fact needing no additional demonstration.¹⁷ As an expression of the *communis opinio*, Wheeler's pronouncements met with little opposition for decades. However, that orthodox theory of posthumous arrangement has lately been subjected to rigorous scrutiny. As a result, more and more specialists in the field now subscribe to the opinion that extensive patterns of authorial organization are still to be dis-

cerned in the *liber Catulli*, despite occasional lacunae and minor textual disturbances.¹⁸

Wide-scale acceptance of Catullan editorship is most pronounced for the first section, the so-called polymetric pieces 1 through 60.¹⁹ Here, critics have long acknowledged the existence of two logically articulated and internally consistent cycles of poems connected by subject matter: an opening sequence of poems 2 through 11, arguably intended to provide readers with a capsule overview of the Lesbia affair (Barwick; Segal), and a subsequent group of six lampoons ridiculing Furius and Aurelius (Barwick; Wiseman 1969: 3–4, 7–13; Skinner 1981: 43–47).²⁰ The polymetrics display characteristic ordering strategies, such as the habitual separation of two related poems by an unrelated poem to form an A-B-A pattern (Santirocco 10). Motif-repetitions and verbal parallels, including direct quotations (e.g., 23.1, *Furi, cui neque servus est neque arca*, echoed in poem 24 at lines 5, 8, and 10), link cycle components tightly and establish cross-references to external but affiliated pieces, as in the famous reiteration of 11.19, *identidem*, at 51.3. Otto Skutsch's monumental discovery that the poems in hendecasyllabic meter are grouped according to the strict or lax treatment of the Aeolic base appears to provide empirical evidence of authorial selection and disposition.²¹ Jocelyn, in addition, notes lexical and syntactical peculiarities of the poems in lyric meters (11, 17, 30, 34, and 51) that mark them as distinct from those in iambic and "Phalaecian" verse; at the same time, he remarks upon their regular distribution among the other items (1999: 341).²² In combination with later *testimonia*, such distinctive patterning permits the conclusion that these poems, which once constituted a separate polymetric *libellus* known to antiquity as the *Passer*, still preserve intact their original schemes of arrangement designed to reinforce meaning (Clausen 1976; Van Sickle 1981; Skinner 1981 *passim*; Johnson 109–17).

Yet in the polymetrics, as elsewhere in the *liber Catulli*, crisp rational articulation is blurred by the Alexandrian aesthetic tenet of *poikilia*, which governs the apparently haphazard disposition of odd texts (Wiseman 1969: 4). Incorporated into Roman poetic theory as *variatio*, that principle of diversification explains many apparently random discontinuities in the Catullan corpus.²³ Because the structural framework of the collection is so episodic, philologists must pay close heed to the reading dynamics generated by *variatio*. Formalistic models of arrangement that concentrate on blocking out mathematical symmetries and chiasmic structural parallels fail to convince because they do not take those dynamics into consideration: when they represent the notional *libellus* as a tight schematic unity, they contradict the ordinary reader's experience of loose disarray.²⁴

The hermeneutic procedure of sequential reading—tracing continuous

thematic development through an ensemble of poems in a manner analogous to the actual process of reading a scroll—sheds valuable light on Catullan heterogeneity.²⁵ In contrast to a text in codex form, which permits skipping around because it is readily available to the eye all at once, the ancient scroll discharges its meanings gradually (Witke 1983: 11). Linear progression, with corollary implications of narrativity, is therefore imposed upon the *volumen* as a natural and inevitable consequence of Greco-Roman reading practices (Porter 3). This consideration permits organizers of poetic collections to achieve telling effects by regulating the flow of coherent statement, that is, by fulfilling expectations of continuity through the juxtaposition of logically and thematically connected pieces, only to thwart audience anticipation with subsequent gaps and reversals.²⁶ Controlling issues uncovered in the course of sequential reading progress fitfully, elaborated through reiteration yet qualified by tonal dissonances and by semantic or temporal breaks. Like the narrative shifts and digressions that constitute a recognized structural feature of the neoteric epyllion, thematic interruption is an essential component of this method of book arrangement.

As a rule, though, students of Latin do not initially encounter Catullus in book form, as an aggregate, but struggle instead through discrete excerpts from the collection contained in a beginner's anthology. That first confrontation may well create the impression of a group of displaced texts, reinforced later by acquaintance with the whole corpus in its present mutilated state. Juxtaposed dissonances then give rise to frustration over narrative inconsistency as contradictory data are found to provide neither a simple resolution to the emotional and ethical dilemmas posed within the Catullan text nor a satisfactory ending to the poet's own story. Confronting that welter of conflicting subject positions, logical and chronological irregularities, and tangled cross-references, some contemporary critics feel justified in contending that all textual scenarios potentially open to readers of Catullus are valid, since no one set of outcomes is expressly privileged.

Micaela Janan flatly rejects the possibility of arriving at any ultimate linear exposition: "because the poems offer just enough similarity to suggest patterns, and just enough anomaly to refuse any definitive pattern, they cohere and dissolve constantly before our eyes" (143). Starting from other methodological premises, Miller draws similar conclusions: Catullus' collection is a "garden of forking paths" of meaning that "exist and interact with one another in a virtual time which allows multiple levels of consciousness, multiple temporalities to operate simultaneously" (1994: 75).²⁷ To some extent, these assertions are correct, for paradox and self-contradiction are elements organic to Catullan signification. Neither

scholar, though, pays sufficient attention to the visual and tactile experience of manipulating an ancient scroll and its effect upon cognitive apprehension of the emerging content. Whereas Janan and Miller conclude in *aporia*, regarding the text as an oscillating force-field of insoluble contradictions, I maintain that the sequentiality of the reading experience imposed by the mechanical act of unrolling the scroll would have created and sustained a linear dimension against which temporal reversals and fluctuations played in counterpoint.²⁸ Though readers were expected to scroll backward as well as forward, observing in passing all manner of non-contiguous thematic intersections, they could not entirely escape, much less transcend, the serial progression of events realized through continually unwinding and stretching out the rolled papyrus. For the determination of meaning, that groundnote of narrativity will prove essential.

Although majority opinion grants that extensive traces of authorial design remain in the polymetrics, uncertainty still exists about the original format of other sections of the corpus. However, some hard evidence for divisions of the archetype survives in O, a fourteenth-century manuscript now in Oxford.²⁹ Its scribe has preserved an apparent break after poem 60, which ends five lines above the bottom of fol. 14v.³⁰ Poem 61 then begins at the top of the next page, after a space of one line; following it is the notation *Explicit epithalamium*, an indication that the marriage song may once have stood alone. Most advocates of Catullan arrangement surmise that poem 64, the epyllion on the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, first circulated as an independent *libellus*.³¹ At the beginning of this poem, too, O retains glosses and variants that would have separated it from the closing lines of poem 63.³²

The proposition that 65 through 116, a group of approximately fifty-five long and short pieces in elegiac meter, might represent yet another *libellus* once circulating by itself was first advanced by King in her much-cited article (383–84). This hypothesis has some manuscript support, insofar as O begins all poems in elegiacs—and *only* those poems—with an illuminated initial letter, which is followed by a capitalized second letter aligned with the first letter of succeeding lines. Ullman, the first to observe the significance of this paleographic departure, proposes as one likely explanation that either the lost Veronensis (the common ancestor of all existing manuscripts of Catullus) or one of its predecessors had been compiled from separate *libelli*, “and that a new *libellus* began with poem 65” (104).

However, scholars have also observed correlations between the longer elegies 65 through 68b and the other *carmina maiora* 61–64. Each of the four earlier poems is said to be connected with the elegiac group by the theme of marriage, for example (so Lieberg 1958), or through a structur-

al juxtaposition of purely human and human-divine unions, for which poem 64, in combining the two, serves as centerpiece (so Most). Martin (172–84) notes that each of the poems surrounding 64 can be seen to contrast thematically with its opposite number, forming a chiasmic sequence: in such a complex interactive grouping he confidently discerns “the poet’s fingerprints.” Dettmer (1997: 115–50), the latest to argue that all the long poems are integrated, traces out a bipartite arrangement based on mathematical as well as thematic correspondence. Such connections exist and are for the most part credible, but they do not invalidate the premise of a separate elegiac *libellus*. The idea that Catullus published a complete edition of all his poems was broached by Quinn (1972b: 9–20), who drew a parallel with the three volumes of Cornelius Nepos’ *Chronica*, mentioned prominently in the programmatic poem 1. His suggestion has been taken up and elaborated by Wiseman (1979b: 175–82; cf. 1985: 265–66). Like Quinn and Wiseman, I think that Catullus himself, still later in life, was responsible for issuing the tripartite collection, and, in doing so, for placing 61 through 64 where they would gracefully link up with the opening poems of the elegiac group.³³ Yet I also insist, more strongly than they do, that this final collection was not made from materials previously undisseminated, but instead put together from works originally circulating as single poems or in self-contained *libelli*.

The possibility that the elegies and epigrams constituted one such independent volume has not been explored at proper length, with due attention given to the impact of the poems as an ensemble, as distinct from their individual content. One objective of the present study is to fill that need. Employing the technique of sequential reading, and resorting to the timeworn but indispensable procedure of close literary analysis, I attempt to trace recurrent motifs that finally seem to coalesce, despite frequent surface disruptions, into an integrated whole. That underlying pattern of semantic coherence invites me to read the elegiac *libellus* as a self-conscious artistic declaration.

Resorting, however, to such an interpretive framework can no longer be done in benign innocence. By casting doubt on epistemological tenets as well as methods of procedure, the influx into classical studies of what is conveniently labeled “theory” may appear to have (always) already rendered my project obsolete. Critical postulates once taken for granted, such as the controlling operations of authorial intentionality and their transparent realization in the artistic product, are today viewed by many as problematic. Hence interpretive premises can be classified as heuristic fictions, textual meanings proclaimed dizzyingly indeterminate, discursive closure thought an impossibility, and the death of the author kept from his poems only through a conspiracy of silence (Kennedy 1993: 6–12;

Martindale 11–18; cf. Woodman and Powell 1992b). Even conservative classicists are asking colleagues to reflect responsibly upon their methodological procedures: as Karl Galinsky observes, hermeneutic is by no means absent from the current interpretation of Roman poetry—“it is simply that often it is not stated” (3). For forward-thinking Latinists, theoretical self-consciousness has become prerequisite to an informed criticism. Before embarking upon the proposed examination of Catullus 65–116, then, I feel obligated to unpack my own hermeneutic baggage in a fashion that would not have been necessary, nor in fact welcome, two decades ago.

Rules of Engagement

Past arguments for Catullan arrangement, as we have seen, were grounded on the premise that the physical layout of at least some portion of the corpus shows demonstrable intent to marshal thematic, verbal, and/or metrical elements into architectonic patterns, an unlikely aspiration for a posthumous editor. If a hypothetical proliferation of meanings precludes *evident* authorial intention from being invoked as a firm initial postulate, alleged schemes of patterning lose any objective guarantee of certainty and are then in danger of being dismissed as mere fabrications imposed from without by ingenious explicators such as myself.³⁴ Now, we are admittedly in no position to extract knowledge of the poet’s intentions from his work. At best, we can only conjecture. Furthermore, speculation as to what Catullus might have had in mind is inevitably guided by our own institutionalized frames of reading, which have lately been characterized by one antipositivist as “provisional, pragmatic, heuristic and contingent” mechanisms for limiting textual indeterminacies (Martindale 14).

Yet I do not think an appeal to intent should automatically invalidate this inquiry. However nebulous its rationale, the concrete action of placing a selected poem in a given position within a larger framework involves deliberate choice, made prior to and independent of the reader’s encounter with the finished product. During the process of interpretation, then, one may acknowledge the superabundance of potential meanings capable of resulting from any placement decision but at the same time call attention to extant collocations whose unusual expressive force would seem to buttress the assumption of authorial oversight. Whether other readers share such a perception of apt placement must serve as the litmus test.

As I explicate the texts and their articulations, I resort to an eclectic mix of interpretive strategies drawn from current critical discourses, especially those of reader-response criticism, intertextuality, feminist criticism, and

poststructuralism. From the perspective of a twenty-first-century commentator, the extant Catullan corpus appears to solicit, perhaps even to demand, such an array of approaches. As Janan has argued, the lacunose state of the text and the absence of rational and chronological development place an inordinate burden of explanation upon the shoulders of the reader, who is repeatedly cheated by false expectations of closure. Within the corpus itself, as numerous analyses have shown, allusivity is pervasive. The prominence of the cycle of poems bearing upon Catullus' thwarted desire for a woman named Lesbia invites a feminist interrogation of its implicit gender assumptions. Finally, Lesbia's function as a projection of Woman, counter for that which escapes intelligibility, requires attention to the ubiquitous slippages of signifier and signified throughout the cycle. As one key maneuver in its literary operations, Catullus' collection probes the very limits imposed upon empirical knowledge.³⁵ Thus it transcends exclusively positivist modes of analysis, which fail to provide a fully satisfying account of the complex intersubjective transactions between readers and text.

Focusing upon the reading experience of both external and internal audiences is one major strategic element of my inquiry. Rabinowitz (1977; cf. 1986: 117–19) distinguishes four types of textual audience, though not all are inevitably realized in a particular work. The “actual audience,” composed of flesh-and-blood readers, exists, of course, outside the narrative itself, while the “authorial audience” for whom it was rhetorically designed, the “narrative audience” addressed by the fictive speaker, and the “ideal narrative audience,” which accepts uncritically whatever that speaker may have to say, are all internal, that is, discursive, constructs. For the author's rhetoric to have its appropriate effect, members of the actual audience need to make themselves conform as closely as possible to textual specifications for the authorial audience and must, at the same time, enter imaginatively into the role of narrative audience. Fantasy is the product of hiatus between the factual experience and beliefs assigned to the authorial and the narrative audiences, respectively. Irony, on the other hand, arises from a disparity in awareness between the narrative and the ideal audiences, so that the former is called upon to repudiate the view of events to which the latter subscribes. While this model may appear unduly complicated, it should prove helpful for determining the import of certain difficult passages where the question of who is speaking, or to whom, becomes crucial in ascertaining meaning.³⁶ For general purposes of analysis, however, I plan to adhere to the simpler distinction between external and internal audiences outlined above.

When dealing with the external audience, we must also distinguish between the effect of a text on those hearing it recited and on readers who

found it juxtaposed with other texts in a *libellus*. Ancient authors were themselves conscious of the dissimilar impressions made by spoken and by written discourse. For confirmation of that point, we need look no further than Socrates' famous remarks at *Phaedrus* 275d–e:

Δεινὸν γὰρ που, ὦ Φαῖδρε, τοῦτ' ἔχει γραφή, καὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς ὁμοιον ζωγραφία. καὶ γὰρ τὰ ἐκείνης ἔκγονα ἔστηκε μὲν ὡς ζῶντα, ἐὰν δ' ἀνέρῃ τι, σεμνῶς πάνυ σιγᾷ. ταύτῳ δὲ καὶ οἱ λόγοι δόξαις μὲν ἂν ὡς τι φρονοῦντας αὐτοὺς λέγειν, ἐὰν δέ τι ἔρη τῶν λεγομένων βουλόμενος μαθεῖν, ἔν τι σημαίνει μόνον ταύτῳ ἀεί. ὅταν δὲ ἅπαξ γραφῇ, κυλινδεῖται μὲν πανταχοῦ πᾶς λόγος ὁμοίως παρὰ τοῖς ἐπαύουσιν, ὡς δ' αὐτῶς παρ' οἷς οὐδὲν προσήκει, καὶ οὐκ ἐπίσταται λέγειν οἷς δεῖ γε καὶ μή.

For writing, *Phaedrus*, has this somewhat odd quality, really analogous to painting. Products of painting stand fixed as though alive, but if you ask them something, they proudly remain quite silent. Written words do the same thing. You might think they speak as though they had understanding, but if you ask a question about what things are being said, wishing to learn, they make one statement only, always the same statement. And, once it is written down, every account is spread every which way, equally among those who grasp it as among those who have no business with it, and it doesn't know to whom it should speak and to whom it shouldn't.

With the written text Plato's spokesman contrasts spoken discourse, writing's "legitimate brother" (ἀδελφὸς γνήσιος), better and "more effective" (δυνατώτερος) because it can defend itself from error and reserve its meanings for those capable of understanding them (276a). Thus writing, in the philosopher's view, is dangerously vulnerable to misconstruction and debasement, whereas oral communication is not. When we take up the elegiac epigrams, an examination of how far this Platonic distinction between speech and writing can be pressed will supply insights into *Lesbia's* function as a *scripta puella* or symbol of the poetic product.

Trained in rhetoric and comfortable with declamation, Roman authors were acutely conscious of the impact of their compositions on listeners. Like Socrates, they automatically distinguished impressions created by recitation from those produced by reading.³⁷ *Sunt qui audiant, sunt qui legant*, the younger Pliny reminds a correspondent, *nos modo dignum aliquid auribus dignum chartis elaboremus*, "there are those who listen and those who read; let us then devise something fit for ears and fit for paper" (*Ep.* 4.16.3; cf. 3.15.3–5). To that general observation Catullus is no exception.³⁸ The performance features of his poetry are often noted and have

indeed enjoyed considerable critical attention of late (Wiseman 1985: 124–29; Väisänen 39–68; Newman 140–43; Gamel; Fredrick; Wray 55–63). In a previous study (Skinner 1993), I attempted to define a socio-historical context for the hypothesis of Catullan poetic performance by suggesting that the author presented his verse, most likely by invitation, at formal banquets and employed it as a vehicle of self-promotion within the upper echelons of society. Thus the actual audience for his poems would have been the small circle of élite Romans in which he moved. Following Wiseman, I will assume that a large number of the texts to be discussed here, with the obvious exception of the epistolary *recusationes*, were designed in the first place for recitation, presumably at *convivia*, “among those whose social sophistication met the exacting standards of Catullus and his friends” (1985: 127). Confronting as a written text what was previously a script creates a felt lack:

Because the written poem is the record of a performance we have missed, and the spoken poem can never realize the possibilities of the written text, the poem is always either more immediate or more enduring than what we experience. The interpretive attempt to reconstitute the poem is always excessive with respect to the implied original performance; ultimately, we are made to feel that “you had to be there.” (Fitzgerald 6)

Accordingly, the poet’s withdrawal from that circle of associates—announced *per litteras* at the opening of the *libellus*, first in 65 and then, more resolutely, in 68a—should be viewed as programmatic.³⁹ Calling attention to the physical removal of speaker from addressee, it suggests that a distinction between oral and written modes of textual delivery has been superimposed upon the already existing metonymic opposition between Rome and Verona as sites, respectively, of creative vitality and its absence. To the degree that a text in the elegiac collection retains vestiges of its earlier orality, it will encapsulate that contrast of past and present.

Whatever its original circumstances of composition and delivery, a poem inserted into a *libellus* enters into shifting relations of correspondence and contrast—“dialogical” relations, as Miller (1994: 51) terms them—with its fellow poems and becomes a part of the stream of thoughts and feelings produced as the papyrus is slowly rolled out. In trying to recapture the contradictory impressions of a contemporary Roman working through Catullus’ text for the first time, I will draw upon Wolfgang Iser’s phenomenological view of the interpretive process as a progressive synthesis of meaning, involving continual reevaluation of what has been ascertained previously (107–34 and 180–231).⁴⁰ Although importing my own foreign subjectivity into the text is unavoidable, I will

attempt to align that subjectivity, as far as I can, with the consciousness of a hypothetical ancient reader by invoking Jauss' concept of a "horizon of expectations" governing textual reception (1982: 22–28).⁴¹ Although partial and often distorted, some notion of those expectations can be recovered by turning to social history, which provides information about cultural practices and assumptions, shared by author and external audience, that underpin the composition of poetic fictions (Leach 1997: 354).

In contrast to a live speaker manipulating the reactions of listeners by intonation, timing, and body movement, writers control audience impressions *in absentia* only insofar as such impressions can be programmed into the text as part of an intelligible system of codification.⁴² Because literary codes evolve over time, as an outgrowth of a developing tradition, a new text is always compelled to assimilate and respond to antecedent models. Familiarity with the general rules of interpretation dictated by those models produces a competent reader.⁴³ Hence Conte can assert that intertextuality, the accumulation of links between a given text and its predecessors, "defines the condition of literary readability" (1986: 29). The distinctive feature of poetic discourse that acknowledges and emphasizes such indebtedness to precedent is allusion or reference, functionally defined by Wills as "how one text quotes, comments, corrects, integrates, and rereads another text" (15). To the follow-up question of how given units of poetic discourse—intrinsically itself a "marked" form of speech—can be recognized as pointers to another text, Wills replies (17):

If poetic language is language set apart from ordinary discourse, if only for a moment in a particular context, so allusive language is language set apart from poetic discourse, if only for a moment. Allusive language is not rarefied *per se*; it is merely distanced from other poetic language, and isolable for that reason.

We will discover that allusive gestures toward antecedent texts, both Greek and Roman, are a conspicuous feature of Catullus' poems in elegiac distiches, especially observable in the suite of longer pieces that opens the *libellus*. These gestures are, to use Wills' term, "referential," which I employ in the sense of "having the capacity to impose additional, often conflicting, meanings upon the import of the passage." The resounding density of the intertextual matrix produced by allusion furthers the assumption that artistic concerns themselves are a dominant preoccupation of the collection.

Since the degree of conscious volition involved in the use of a model cannot be firmly established,⁴⁴ it might seem prudent to divorce the "communicative intent" of the text, which may be inferred through an analysis of coding strategies, from any intent of the author.⁴⁵ While making such a

distinction is feasible in theory, however, it is impossible to maintain as a procedure of practical criticism. For Roman writers, the effectiveness of what they themselves called *imitatio* depended upon anticipated recognition of the source by an informed reader. The elder Seneca tells us, for example, that Arellius Fuscus used to embellish his declamations with references to Vergil *ut Maecenati imputaret*, “to lay Maecenas under obligation,” and that Ovid took many verses from Vergil *non subripiendi causa, sed palam mutuandi, hoc animo ut vellet agnosci*, “not in order to steal, but to borrow openly, with a view to being noticed” (*Suas.* 3.5, 7). Accordingly, the reader who observes a textual conjunction and deduces its significance is indispensable to the entire undertaking. As Hinds asserts, such a “text-and-reader-oriented intertextuality” must then make room for the “intention-bearing author,” if only as a convenient tool (49):

The axiom that meaning is constructed at the point of reception becomes a better tool for dealing with the kinds of case which interest students of philological allusion if it embraces the fact (i.e. rather than occluding it) that one of the most persistent ways in which both Roman and modern readers construct the meaning of a poetic text is by attempting to construct from (and for) it an intention-bearing authorial voice, a construction which they generally hope or believe (in a belief which must always be partly misguided) to be a reconstruction; and the author thus (re)constructed is one who writes towards an implied reader who will attempt such a (re)construction.

This is not to claim, however, that every reader tamely follows intertextual traces planted by an author, real or conjectured, to arrive at *only* one predetermined meaning. No two readers interpret one set of textual cues in precisely the same way, nor can any one reader, including the text’s composer, interpret the same set of cues in *exactly* the same way twice (Hinds 46–47). Thus a distinction between the inherent meaning of a textual allusion and the specific construction placed upon it by a reader also collapses in practice. Instead, shifting between those two totalizing perspectives is a structural peculiarity of the reading process (Culler 73). In any critical venture, though, such a conceptual distinction is routinely made “so that acts of interpretation can continue to be produced.”⁴⁶

Lest that last procedural observation promptly trigger an accusation of professional cynicism—meanings are assumed to “be there,” planted by an author, so that articles can be written and assistant professors get tenure—I should add that volumes of both aesthetic and critical theory in English studies are now devoting renewed attention to traces of decision-making that arguably constitute the artist’s enduring presence in the artwork.

Taking *Hamlet* as his example, Charles Altieri states that “while we must attribute specific intentions to every character, the deepest force of the work resides in the activity of a synthetic intelligence that sets those characters in relation to one another and eventually proposes values for its own constructive decisions” (15).⁴⁷ In proposing a general theory of poetic forms, Susan Stewart suggests that “the poet discovers his or her identity as a consequence of form making” and “*intends* [her italics] toward another, even if the other is the poet apprehending the work in a later time and other space” (12); she, too, insists that when we engage with the poetic artifact “it is the intentions and activities of individual persons that we seek to recover and come to know” (328). One common factor in both these approaches is a reliance upon phenomenology as a method of investigating aesthetic response to the work (Altieri 292–94; Stewart ix). True, such thinking lies at a considerable remove from the present theoretical environment in classical studies, where Hinds can allow the intention-bearing author only the status of “construct” and Edmunds ascribe intertextuality solely to “the structuring activity of the reader” (157–59). I confess, though, that it fits my own critical practices much more comfortably.⁴⁸ To sum up, then: insofar as texts, despite their instabilities, do seem to guide readers toward the apprehension of some meanings while excluding others, I will treat certain kinds of echoes and repetitions as directives ascribable, with due caution, to poetic agency.

Genre is the quintessential means of monitoring the process of reading a Latin text. All configurations of the internal audience—including, first and foremost, that of the authorial audience targeted by the writer’s rhetoric—will consequently be treated in this study as functions of the elegiac and epigrammatic genres. Conte’s concept of a reader-addressee, “the figure of the recipient as anticipated by the text” to whose contours “all future, virtual readers must adapt themselves” (1994: xx), is intrinsic to this protocol. The form of the addressee is defined by the form and intentionality of the text, according to a “structure of constraints,” or codifications, subsumed within the work and contingent upon its particular goals. For the *libellus*, as we will see, the authorial audience is shaped by the paradigm of elegy as *carmina maesta* programmatically set forth in poem 65, though subsequently qualified. In 65, a Latin transcription of Callimachus is accompanied by a verse epistle, a subgenre of elegy suited to representing “the voice of a marginal or marginalized character, upon whom the very distance to which he finds himself confined imposes a subjective filter through which events are interpreted” (Conte 1994: 176 n. 20). The reader of the elegies and epigrams is thereby projected into the embodiment of a distant addressee being informed of the speaker’s plight. Therefore, the affective modulation from 65 to 116, from Hortalus, the

sympathetic dedicatee of the *carmina Battiadae*, to Gellius, on whom their effect is completely lost, involves a shift in the internal reader's relation to the speaker Catullus that also creates the trajectory of the elegiac book.

Since Catullus' named correspondents are mostly men, it is natural to assume that his authorial audience is male by definition. The hendecasyllabics indeed seem to posit a male reader. For example, the scenario of poem 16, which tropes vicarious appreciation of lascivious *versiculi* as sexual surrender, is outrageously homoerotic (Selden 1992: 488; Fitzgerald 49–51). While poem 35 famously imagines a *Sapphica puella musa doctior*, and poem 36 shows the speaker's *puella* passing sentence on his iambs, each woman's ability to read competently is at least questioned, if not actually disallowed. In poem 42, Catullus' notebooks, symbolic of his work-in-progress, fall into the hands of a woman who refuses to be humiliated by his invective, a disarming instance of "artistic failure" in which the reader-figure is gendered as female in order to underscore her lack of collaboration in the poetic project.⁴⁹

Catullan elegy and epigram, on the other hand, appear to interrogate all reading assumptions, not excluding belief in a firmly gendered reader. While they waver between the mutually exclusive polarities of "woman as Goddess" and "woman as Whore," the epigrams in particular dramatize the impossibility of attaining the fantasized object of desire through the mechanism of an epistemological breakdown that spares nothing, not even the subject position of the lover with whom a male reader will presumably identify (Janan 81–88). Yet the authorial audience is not, or at least not necessarily, situated so as to be caught up in that collapse of faith: in 68a, for example, it is patently divorced from the epistolary addressee, whose prostrate emotional state, expressed in the stylized hyperbole of the *sermo amatorius*, identifies him as a foil for the *amator* of the Lesbia cycle. Furthermore, Catullus periodically introduces an interlocutor who attempts to dissuade the speaker from his course of action, employing the voice of common sense. That interlocutor is a nameless entity, and assessments of his/her literary function vary.⁵⁰ Does his/her presence reduce the authorial audience to the status of eavesdropper, or does it rather make room for an intersubjective dialogue with the speaker? If the authorial audience is expected to identify with that disembodied voice, should it be heard as open and ungendered? Lastly, does Lesbia herself speak within the corpus, and can her voice serve as a benchmark for the Catullan reader? These are issues to be examined in subsequent chapters.

If the outline of the interlocutor is hazy, the poet's representation of himself as the first-person textual speaker, "Catullus," is, in contrast, vivid and captivating. Indeed, that sharp delineation of a charming, highly idiosyncratic personality is what accounts for earlier scholarly preoccupation

with the “authentic” Catullus as an object of intense biographical and psychological scrutiny. As we have seen, Schwabe’s attempt to extract a life story of the poet from his poems while fitting the texts themselves, like jigsaw puzzle pieces, into the overall plot is now rightly dismissed as an exercise in circular reasoning. Yet excluding Catullus completely from his text, reducing him to a colorless “author-function,” turns out to be a discursive impossibility. Catullan poetry is notorious for its extraordinary tactics of audience captation; it is, furthermore, “striking in its eagerness not simply to engage readers but actually to control their reactions to the text and hence, their understanding of it” (Pedrick 1986: 187–88). The speaker’s charged textual presence is the result of expert linguistic engineering. When audiences confess to “a sense of unmediated access to the poet’s heart and mind,” it is because they “play out a series of responses that is already predicated and predicted by his work” (Selden 1992: 489).

Because that illusion of intimate emotional encounter is so bound up with reading practices inscribed into the text, the interpreter’s construction of “Catullus” underpins meaning. Although the figure of the speaker in the *liber Catulli* as a whole may produce the same overall impression on an audience, particular texts, being inherently equivocal, strike individual readers very differently and so give rise to intractable disputes over exegesis. Depending on intersubjective dynamics, for example, one person will hear audible sarcasm directed at Furius and Aurelius in poem 11, while another, equally skilled at construing Latin, will detect a note of genuine warmth: the text is designed, I believe, to evoke both responses at once, in keeping with the obsessive Catullan theme of ambiguity in personal relationships.⁵¹ Nevertheless, and in spite of those organic fissures in the portrayal of the textual *ego*, it does not remain perpetually fragmented but at length achieves the status of a holistic entity, for the reader performs her own rhetorically prescribed task by orchestrating her Catullus into a coherent self. The glue that will hold “him” together is her psychic affinity with “his” personality—that is, with an alternative fictional construction of *herself* that permeates and finally overflows the interstices of the poetic text. In that way Catullus the author remains eternally present to us: *c’est nous*.

Lines of Inquiry

I hope the above précis of my critical tenets will have equipped my audience with an embryonic notion, at least, of the platform on which the investigation rests and the protocols of the discussion. It remains only to designate my own hypothetical reader and then to chart the course of the ensuing argument. This monograph was conceived as a specialized scholarly undertaking.

I presume that fellow classicists will be aware of the manifold problems of the Catullan corpus, but I am not addressing experts in the field exclusively. In fact, my notional authorial audience is a second-year student in a doctoral program who has just been assigned a seminar paper on the arrangement of the *Catulli Veronensis liber*, due before Thanksgiving, no extensions and no incompletes. I wish him joy of it, having been in those straits myself.⁵² To assist him in evaluating the argument, I will include my own translations of all primary source materials in Greek and Latin. Some parts of this study may be of interest, I trust, to veteran Catullan scholars. Because my imagined reader is a student, though, I will don my pedagogical hat from time to time to elucidate points already well understood by most learned colleagues, even at the risk of becoming tedious.

In dealing with theoretical paradigms, I intend to be quite down-to-earth. Even today, relatively few students in Classics graduate programs are solidly prepared in contemporary literary theory. Compared to their counterparts in comparative literature and modern language departments, these younger classicists are therefore at a procedural disadvantage. Having an accessible model for incorporating new methodologies into conventional philological inquiry might well be helpful. When I bring in theory, then, I will try to do it as painlessly as possible, tying it to specific passages where its application seems both relevant and useful and presenting it in a straightforward, jargon-free manner. Purists may perhaps object to the clumsiness of my formulations, which will necessarily oversimplify complicated conceptual issues. However, recent developments in the field have convinced me that Catullus' text is not merely enhanced but in fact rendered fundamentally more intelligible by poststructural approaches. Any metacritical tools one applies to it, no matter how rudimentary, are therefore better than none at all.

I will begin this study by examining the relationship of poems 65 and 116, which are widely assumed to be corresponding professions of allegiance to Callimachean doctrine placed at the beginning and end of the elegiac book. While the programmatic thrust of both pieces appears straightforward, it turns out to be destabilized in each instance by the dynamics of the *recusatio*. Expected situational parallels between the opening and closing poems in a *libellus* are counterbalanced by a marked difference in stance toward the named addressees Hortalus and Gellius. In each text, poetic memory carries an unusually large burden of meaning: the critical fusion of quasi-factual detail and literary allusion in 65 anticipates the expressive subjectivity of the Laodamia *exemplum*, and in 116 a pregnant recollection of Remus' death at the hands of his brother Romulus transforms Ennian epic into a metonymic vehicle for Catullus' ultimate rejection of Callimachean values.

Next, I will defend the hypothesis that poems 65 through 68b are an introductory suite setting forth the major themes of the elegiac corpus. Like the corresponding procession of poems 2–11, the “Lesbia cycle” that opens the polymetric *Passer*, this series of five longer elegies is programmatic insofar as it forms a composite prelude to the entire *libellus*. The ordering of the individual texts is symmetrical: two pairs of elaborate gift-pieces and their transmittal letters frame 67, an imaginary exchange between a house door and an interviewer. The placement of the latter text requires detailed investigation, for it appears curious that a racy lampoon, however amusing, should occupy the most significant place within a programmatic sequence. We will discover, however, that poem 67 is both the affective and the thematic center for a wholesale interrogation of the validity of poetic meaning.

The third and fourth chapters offer sequential readings of the elegiac epigrams 69–92 and 93–115, respectively, showing how each group takes up and amplifies motifs initially sounded in the opening elegiac sequence. To relate each and every epigram to all the others, however, would be far too exhaustive a task. I plan instead to track the progressive elaboration of three interconnected threads: loss of confidence in the validity of poetic language and the feasibility of the neoteric poetic project; mistrust of human relationships, as encapsulated in the failed *foedus amicitiae*; and cynical disparagement of overall venality in the political system. We will find that the erotic epigrams cannot be read in isolation, apart from the poems addressing aesthetic or topical concerns, for Lesbia, as the marker of an untrustworthy textuality, embodies the ineffectual quality of all modes of discourse—the mendacity of public rhetoric and the uncertainty of figured speech as well as the brittleness of the lover’s vow.

In the fifth chapter, I present a comprehensive reading of Catullus 68a–b in the light of those configurations of meaning traced out in the earlier chapters. At first glance a gift-poem discharging an obligation to a friend, 68b is in reality a poignant meditation on the legitimacy of the artist’s calling, given the intrinsic speciousness of poetry, while its transmittal letter 68a is yet another *recusatio* bidding farewell to the reading public. Read in conjunction, and then reread, the pair of elegies constitutes a programmatic statement of the ultimate aim of the collection.

My conclusion surveys the architectonics of the *libellus* in retrospect. First we will observe how particular recurrent motifs found in the epigrams extend the ramifications of thematic concerns raised in the opening cycle of longer elegies. Then we will wrap things up by revisiting the problem of authorial arrangement. I will suggest a likely semiotic function for the chronological inconsistencies, breaks in narrative sequence, and harsh juxtapositions that have scandalized so many readers. After that, we may

find ourselves prepared to deconstruct the hypothesis of a posthumous editor. His presence in Catullan studies solves a nonproblem, which arose when modern principles of organization were erroneously ascribed to Roman lyric and elegiac poetry collections. Once we free ourselves from such anachronistic presuppositions, we will be in a much better position to discover how ancient readers approached the Catullan *libellus* and how they responded to it.

Having provided a proleptic overview of arguments and conclusions, I end this chapter by proposing one final target of inquiry.⁵³ As remarked above, the “epistemic shift” in the humanities has shaken the foundations of the conventional expository practices associated with New Criticism. To speak of universally applicable messages verified by deducing authorial intent may now lay commentators open to accusations of positivist naiveté. Yet the prospect of perpetually subjecting interpretive stances to scrutiny, thereby opening up an infinite methodological regress, is alarming, because in doing so we may inadvertently snuff out our most ardent motive for producing interpretations. Elucidation of obscurities that create anxiety by blocking affective or cognitive engagement with the text drives critical exegesis. Scholars have a private emotional stake in finding comfortable explanations for their puzzles. From the reader’s perspective, moreover, literary apprehension is bilateral: works are perceived as utterance and representation simultaneously, as quasi-authorial communication involving “a sense of the other” and as readerly participation in an imaginary world (Steig 31–32). Grappling with “modes of the hidden,” readers must necessarily posit something extrinsic—at the very least, inferred intentions and constructed author-figures—as the missing correlative to the disquieting experience of living an alien reality as one’s own. Assuming some link, however tenuous, with the author’s sensibility is accordingly required to stabilize textual response.⁵⁴

The great advantage of New Criticism was its foundational guarantee of sure access to the extrinsic via the hypothesis of determinate meaning. Poststructuralist classical scholars, on the other hand, face the worrisome need to cobble together a makeshift platform on which the extrinsic can temporarily rest—that, or stop interpreting altogether. Secondary literature dealing with the *liber Catulli* already offers provocative object lessons about changes in disciplinary *mentalité* wrought by critical movements such as the return of the reader, attention to class and gender, and increased reliance on deconstructive moves. With its physical lacunae and large epistemological gaps, the corpus seems a worthwhile point of departure for an experimental essay that meditates upon the redefined relations of text, author, and audience. By contemplating a specific entity, the elegiac *libellus*, I would like to discover, if only for my own peace

of mind, how a classical scholar trained in traditional methods of confronting a Latin text, methods thought to conform to ancient practice, might reasonably approach it under circumstances now prevailing in the humanities, within an intellectual milieu where the very word “classical” has been problematized and all foundational bets are off. The answer may prove to lie beyond my grasp, but the means are certainly to hand. For me, the textual phenomenon “Catullus”—whether conceived as a manifestation of author, persona, author-function, or projection of self—has always been, and happily remains, good to think with.

CHAPTER ONE



Carmina Battiadae

For their metrical uniformity, if for no other reason, poems 65 through 116 have usually been treated as a distinct part of the *liber Catulli* even by those readers who doubt that Catullus edited his own collection. Recent attention to the configuration of ancient poetry books has given scholars even more cause to regard the texts in elegiac meter as a separate group of poems, since, in conformity with Hellenistic and Roman literary practice, they appear to have been marked off as a discrete unit by ring-construction.¹ Explicit verbal and thematic responsions between the introductory and concluding poems 65 and 116 have been identified and discussed frequently in recent years.² Although the structural function of those correspondences is well understood by now, clarifying their programmatic aim will nevertheless require the further analysis undertaken in this chapter.

The elegiac group opens with a poignant declaration addressed to the celebrated orator Q. Hortensius Hortalus, who is apologetically offered a translation of Callimachus (*haec expressa . . . carmina Battiadae*, 65.16) to replace the original verse Catullus professes himself incapable of composing:

Etsi me assiduo defectum cura dolore
 sevocat a doctis, Hortale, virginibus,
nec potis est dulcis Musarum expromere fetus
 mens animi, tantis fluctuat ipsa malis—
namque mei nuper Lethaeo in gurgite fratris
 pallidulum manans alluit unda pedem,
Troia Rhoeteo quem subter litore tellus
 ereptum nostris obterit ex oculis.
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numquam ego te, vita frater amabilior,

aspiciam posthac? at certe semper amabo,
 semper maesta tua carmina morte canam,³
 qualia sub densis ramorum concinit umbris
 Daulias, absumpti fata gemens Ityli.—
 sed tamen in tantis maeroribus, Hortale, mitto
 haec expressa tibi carmina Battiadae,
 ne tua dicta vagis nequiquam credita ventis
 effluxisse meo forte putes animo,
 ut missum sponsi furtivo munere malum
 procurrit casto virginis e gremio,
 quod miserae oblitae molli sub veste locatum,
 dum adventu matris prosilit, excutitur,
 atque illud prono praeceps agitur decursu,
 huic manat tristi conscius ore rubor.

Though distress calls me, worn out with constant pain, away from the learned virgins, Hortalus, and my heart's reckoning cannot bring forth the sweet fruits of the Muses, reeling as it is with such great troubles—for a rippling wave just now washed with Lethean eddy the poor pale foot of my brother, whom the earth of Troy weighs down, snatched from my sight, beneath the Rhoetean shore. . . . Brother more dear than life, will I never see you again? And yet I will always love you, always sing songs saddened by your death, like those the Daulian bird croons beneath the thick shade of branches, grieving the fate of abducted Itylus—but in such deep mourning, Hortalus, I still send you these translated verses of Battus' son, lest you perhaps think your words, trusted vainly to wandering winds, have slipped from my heart, like an apple sent as a secret gift from her lover rolls from the chaste lap of a maiden, which, stored beneath the soft dress of the forgetful, unlucky girl, is displaced when she jumps up at her mother's arrival; and it drops down and trundles away while a guilty blush washes over her stricken face.

The collection terminates, as we have already seen, in a threat of literary reprisal directed at a certain Gellius, who remains unmollified by the polished Callimachean compositions (*carmina* . . . *Battiadae*, 116.2) dispatched to win him over:

Saepe tibi studiose, animo venante, requirens
 carmina uti possem mittere Battiadae,
 qui te lenirem nobis, neu conarere
 tela infesta <meum> mittere in usque caput,
 hunc video mihi nunc frustra sumptum esse laborem,

Gelli, nec nostras hinc valuisse preces.
 contra nos tela ista tua evitabimus acta,⁴
 at fixus nostris tu dabis supplicium.

Often eagerly seeking, with mind on the prowl, how I could send you songs
 of Battus' son in order to soften you toward me, so that you wouldn't
 always be trying to hurl deadly shafts at my head, I now perceive I under-
 took that labor in vain, Gellius, and my suit hence accomplished nothing.
 I'll dodge your weapons driven at me, and, pierced by mine, you'll pay the
 penalty.

By identifying the Catullan persona, in each instance, as an imitator of Callimachus, the verbal echo stakes out an aesthetic position common to both texts and thereby marks them off as the closely related "framing" pieces regularly found at the beginning and end of an Alexandrian poetry book (Forsyth 1977a; Van Sickle 1981).⁵ Within the overall context of that appeal to earlier poetic tradition, the speaker in each of the texts appears to confront artistic failure: Catullus is unable, on the one hand, to write at all, on the other, to write poetry that achieves its immediate aim.

If we take the statements in each poem at face value, then, we are strongly tempted to construct a logical relationship between them. Silenced by grief in poem 65, the writer strives to rekindle his creativity by translating a major work of his Greek predecessor—the *Coma Berenices* that rounded off Book IV of the *Aetia* with a courtly tribute to Callimachus' royal patroness.⁶ Successful in that effort, and again in full command of his craftsmanship, he first seeks to appease Gellius by a gift of fresh new verse in the manner of Callimachus and then, upon being rebuffed, decides to employ those regained skills to inflict polemic retaliation upon his adversary. The story line is an attractive one because it establishes a temporal and causal link between the beginning and the end of the volume. However, further examination reveals that, in addition to their verbal and thematic connections, these two poems are also closely associated as modes of literary discourse. Each, it has been noted, is a *recusatio* (Macleod 1973: 308; King 383–87). And, unfortunately for the above interpretation, *recusationes* must never be taken at face value.

When "No" Means "Yes"

As a literary conceit, the ancient *recusatio* is nothing if not arch. Speaking in the first person, the poet declines to write a given kind of verse, either in obedience to divine mandate or because of self-acknowledged limitations

upon his talent.⁷ This ironic ploy, which gave later Augustan poets so much scope for wry posturing, produces, in Catullus' hands, a somewhat different effect—entrapping the audience in an aesthetic and rhetorical paradox. Poem 65 is a blanket claim of artistic inhibition enunciated with consummate art. According to Witke's influential reading (1968: 13–27), it enacts, through its own figurative language, a painful progression from the mute despair of bereavement to a kind of poetic epiphany. During this process, it would appear that the speaker, "in the act of explaining his silence, finds his voice" (Block 49). Yet the complex periodic structure of the poem, its expressive word patterning, and its evocative deployment of tropes and figures betray a poet at the height of his rhetorical powers and in complete mastery of his medium right from the outset.⁸ Quinn (1973a: 352) warns us that "the illusion of grief continually breaking through the bonds of rational restraint is an effect of art." This sense of "impromptu performance" is achieved, according to Gordon Williams (47–48), through a highly controlled manipulation of primary, or immediately referential, and secondary, or distanced, language. Hutchinson (299–301) consequently perceives artificiality in the structure and an air of comic detachment in the concluding simile. For Selden (1992: 474–75) the implications are even more sinister. When Catullus, after pleading writer's block, goes on to produce "not only an exemplary piece of verse, but one of the seminal literary texts in the language," the poetic statement is put irreducibly at odds with its rhetorical manner of assertion. If the author is not to be believed when he declares he is incapable of composing poetry, "there are at least reasonable grounds for suspicion that he is no more trustworthy when it comes to the remoter circumstances of his brother's death or elusive states of feeling." For readers constantly alert to the threat of rhetorical chicanery, poem 65 is a scandal, the neoteric version of the Cretan liar paradox.

Like the opening poem, the last epigram in the elegiac group also seems to be a *recusatio*, one of the more familiar kind in which the substitution of one kind of poetry for another furnishes the platform for an artistic manifesto. If *carmina Battiadae* refers to witty aetiological elegies modeled upon the *Coma Berenices*, crude lampoons might be regarded as their opposite. Accordingly, Catullus would be portraying himself as "a Callimachean poet driven into vulgar invective by the anger and frustration Gellius has caused in him" (Macleod 1973: 309). Once again, though, that straightforward reading presents serious difficulties, insofar as it was Callimachus himself who had set the standard for literary polemic against opponents. Whoever the "Telchines" of the *Aetia* prologue may have been, they are not treated gently. We recall, in addition, the famous swipes at detractors at the conclusion of the *Hymn to Apollo* (108–9), where the god compares the voluminous works of Envy's favorites to allu-

vial mud and debris, and in *Epigram* 29 G–P, which stigmatizes popular appeal as sexual promiscuity. Finally, involvement in similar disputes was, it appears, the motive for composition asserted in the lost *Ibis* and in parts of the fragmentary *Iambi*.⁹ To Catullus, then, aetiological verse and polemic verse would not have been opposite kinds of poetry, but instead two integral parts of the same large exemplary canon.¹⁰

Consequently, we should approach consideration of the linkages between poems 65 and 116 by another route, one that assumes indirection as its point of departure. We can begin with a brief glance at the *recusatio* from a theoretical perspective. Gregson Davis, in a major study of Horatian lyric discourse (11–77), identifies this rhetorical device as a “mode of assimilation” that disingenuously recuperates apparently precluded generic motifs. Having shown how “the ‘other’ (generically speaking) is endowed with attributes that appear (or are made to appear) incommensurate with those ascribed to the preferred genre” (71), he illustrates, through specific examples, the tactics—figures of speech, parody, direct subversion of previous statements—used to incorporate the rejected generic element into the lyric pronouncement. Disavowal of a given type of poetry is, in other words, a subterfuge for expansion of the artistic repertoire; it is part of the lyric poet’s efforts to invent a distinct authorial identity for himself by simultaneously distancing himself from and appealing to significant forces shaping the prior poetic tradition. In poems 65 and 116, I believe, Catullus attempts something analogous. But the artistic self-definition in the face of the Greek and earlier Latin literary inheritance that Horace achieves by overtly pitting one genre against another is accomplished in these two Catullan poems more obliquely, chiefly through intertextual references. That technique is best illustrated in a point-by-point examination of poem 65; afterward, its operations in 116 should be fairly self-evident and so can be canvassed briefly.

The Misfortunes of Teucer

At 65.7 Catullus gives us a precious scrap of ostensible biographical data: his brother had been buried “beneath the Rhoetean shore,” that is, near the city of Troy, on the northern coast of the Troad facing the Dardanelles. The gratuitousness of that detail, its apparent irrelevance to the rest of the poem, seems to vouch for its historical authenticity. Hence Wiseman, in reconstructing Catullus’ life and times, can employ the brother’s reported presence in Asia Minor to flesh out epigraphical testimony to a subsequent marriage alliance between the Valerii Catulli and the family of P. Terentius Hispo, one of the leading *publicani* operating in

that region during the poet's lifetime.¹¹ Wiseman's methods are those of a historian, of course, while I am approaching the same evidence from the standpoint of a literary critic. I will therefore stipulate that the fact that Catullus' brother died and was buried in the Troad is not at issue in the following discussion. But I will question whether the particular geographical location of his grave, as it functions in the elegy, should be regarded as *mere* fact and nothing more.¹²

Rhoeteum was already famous as the site of Telamonian Ajax' funerary mound (Mela 1.96).¹³ From Strabo's description of the locale (13.1.30), we learn that a celebrated statue marked the hero's tomb: ecphrastic epigrams (*Anth. Pal.* 7.145, 146) by the third-century B.C.E. poet Asclepiades and by Antipater of Sidon, active at Rome in the following century, describe it as the figure of a personified Arete with her hair cut short in mourning for Ajax' defeat in the contest over Achilles' arms, the immediate cause of his madness and suicide. Griffith (52) identifies a crucial link between the monument of Ajax and poem 66: the portrayal of Arete with cropped hair parallels Berenice's sacrificial dedication of her lock in the *Coma Berenices*. Even more pertinent to Catullus' own circumstances is the fate of Ajax' half-brother Teucer, banished from Salamis for failing to bring his brother home safely. Pointing out that the events subsequent to Ajax' death would readily come to a contemporary reader's mind because of the popularity of Pacuvius' tragedy *Teucer*, Griffith suggests that such factors as an untimely end at Troy, separation from family, and loss of homecoming permit the entire myth to function as a "typological prefiguration" of Catullus' bereavement.

That the story of Ajax does serve as a paradigm of fraternal loss in poem 65 is, I think, a cogent and significant observation. However, the emotive reverberations of the corollary parallel between Teucer and Catullus may extend far beyond simple typology. Like the *exemplum* of Laodamia in 68b, I suggest, the experiences of Telamon's illegitimate son may be a mythic channel for what Colin Macleod has called "the oblique or restrained expression of feeling" (1974: 93). In other words, the speaker's postulated self-identification with Teucer would hint at the underlying complexity of his emotional state not only in 65 but, at least by implication, in the other elegies in which he voices his grief. Exploration of the correspondences between the traditional presentation of Ajax' suicide and its aftermath and the concerns repeatedly expressed by Catullus in mourning his brother's death should establish the likelihood of that hypothesis.

In the *Iliad*, to begin with, the fraternal relationship between Teucer and Ajax seems very much like that of Catullus and his brother. Ajax is the taller, dominant fighter, whose towering ox-hide shield offers cover from which Teucer the bowman can take aim (*Il.* 8.266–72):

Τεῦκρος δ' εἵνατος ἦλθε, παλίντονα τόξα τιταίνων,
 στή δ' ἄρ' ὑπ' Αἴαντος σάκεϊ Τελαμωνιάδαο.
 ἔνθ' Αἴας μὲν ὑπεξέφερεν σάκος· αὐτὰρ ὃ γ' ἥρως
 παπτήνας, ἐπεὶ ἄρ' τιν' ὄϊστεύσας ἐν ὁμίλῳ
 βεβλήκοι, ὁ μὲν αὖθι πεσὼν ἀπὸ θυμὸν ὄλεσσεν,
 αὐτὰρ ὁ αὖτις ἰὼν πάϊς ὥς ὑπὸ μητέρα δύσκειν
 εἰς Αἴανθ'· ὁ δέ μιν σάκεϊ κρύπτασκε φαιινῶ.

. . . and Teucer came ninth, bending his arched bow,
 and set himself under Telamonian Ajax' shield.
 Then Ajax would raise the shield outward.
 Whenever the other warrior, after casting a glance about
 and then shooting into the mêlée, had hit someone,
 his victim would fall and die on the spot, but Teucer
 would go ducking back again, like a child beneath his mother,
 to Ajax, who would screen him with his gleaming shield.

In this manner Teucer quickly makes away with eight Trojan soldiers and earns the praise of Agamemnon, who encourages the hero to glorify his father by reminding him of Telamon's exceptional generosity in rearing him in the palace despite his bastard status (νόθον περ ἑόντα, 284). Agamemnon's characteristically tactless admonition establishes for subsequent mythic tradition the conflict in Teucer's kinship relations: his tenuous place as a member of the royal household is counterbalanced by the mutual affection between him and Ajax, who considers him an equal and close partner. Thus, when Teucer is knocked down by Hector's missile, Ajax rushes forward to save his brother's life, bestriding his body and protecting him with his shield until the wounded man can be carried off "groaning deeply" (330–34).

Now, one striking detail in the passage quoted above is Homer's brief comparison of Teucer and Ajax to a small child and his vigilant mother, which imposes a curious hint of tenderness upon the ruthlessly efficient work of killing. In poem 68, at lines 23–24 and again at 95–96, the Catullan speaker recalls his brother's support for his erotic and literary activities in terms reminiscent of Ajax' benevolent protection of Teucer: *omnia tecum una perierunt gaudia nostra, / quae tuus in vita dulcis alebat amor*. The verb *alebat*, "nurtured," arguably transforms Catullus' relative into "a feminine parent figure,"¹⁴ and is thus reminiscent of Ajax' quasi-maternal role in the *Iliad* passage. This correspondence would imply that the poet's brother not only encouraged such hedonistic pursuits but also defended them from possible censure.

After his suicide, according to the *Little Iliad* (fr. 3 Allen), Ajax did not receive the cremation customary for heroes but, owing to Agamemnon's anger, was instead laid to rest in a coffin (σορός), an ignoble end. The dishonor paid to the corpse was a consistent feature of the epic tradition until Sophocles broke with past treatments and made the question of a fitting burial the overriding focus of his tragedy *Ajax* (Marsh). While the fallen warrior is given a hero's funeral at the conclusion of Sophocles' play, the mourners are limited to Teucer, Ajax' concubine Tecmessa, the dead man's young son Eurysaces, and the chorus of sailors; with the sole exception of Odysseus, the Greek army does not attend. Although there is no indication that Catullus' brother was buried improperly, we are made to understand that the ritual is felt to be incomplete because no family member had been present. At 68.97–100 the speaker laments that his relative is

. . . nunc tam longe non inter nota sepulcra
 nec prope cognatos compositum cineres,
 sed Troia obscena, Troia infelice sepultum
 detinet extremo terra aliena solo.

. . . now laid to rest so far away, not among known tombs nor close by
 the ashes of kinsmen, but, entombed at ill-omened Troy, disastrous Troy,
 a land of strangers holds [him] prisoner in soil at the end of the world.

Interment in a foreign land, far from home, causes pain to survivors because the dead are denied the comfort of being among their next of kin, and also because their welfare in the afterlife depends upon the performance of cult acts by household members (Thomson 1997 *ad loc.*). Distress is compounded because the site of the grave is associated with so much earlier misfortune and suffering. In poem 101, then, Catullus portrays himself reversing the homeward voyage of the Greeks after the sack of Troy to visit Rhoeteum and finally discharge those necessary ancestral duties (*prisco quae more parentum / tradita sunt tristi munere ad inferias*, 7–8). Like Teucer at Ajax' funeral, he carries them out as the single agnate able, under the circumstances, to perform them.

When he first looks upon the dead body of his brother in the *Ajax*, Teucer blames himself for his absence at the crucial moment and foresees Telamon's accusations of cowardice or deliberate treachery and ultimate sentence of banishment (*Aj.* 1006–21).¹⁵ This passage seems to allude to incidents staged in another Sophoclean tragedy, *Teukros*. Very few fragments survive, but among them one short, moving extract from Telamon's speech upon learning of Ajax' death reveals his deep psychic investment in his son and heir (fr. 519 Nauck²):

ὥς ἄρ' ὦ τέκνον, κενήν
 ἔτερπόμεν σου τέρψιν εὐλογομένου
 ὥς ζώντος· ἡ δ' ἄρ' ἐν σκότῳ λαθοῦσά με
 ἔσαιν' Ἐρινὺς ἡδοναῖς ἐψευσμένον.

So, then, my son, the pleasure I took was vain
 in hearing you praised as though alive; and in the dark,
 causing me to forget, the Fury gladdened me,
 deceived by pleasures.

In Pacuvius' Latin adaptation of this drama, the violence of the old king's anger and pain produced superb theatrical moments, to which Cicero, at *de Oratore* 2.193, makes his spokesman M. Antonius bear witness. Antonius has just pointed out that the orator, who must himself experience the emotions he wishes to arouse in his listeners in order to be persuasive, is the first to be extremely moved by his own rhetoric:

... sed, ut dixi, ne hoc in nobis mirum esse videatur, quid potest esse tam fictum quam versus, quam scaena, quam fabulae? tamen in hoc genere saepe ipse vidi, ut ex persona mihi ardere oculi hominis histrionis viderentur †spondalli illa¹⁶ dicentis:

segregare abs te ausu's aut sine illo Salamina ingredi?
 neque paternum aspectum es veritus?
 numquam illum 'aspectum' dicebat, quin mihi Telamo iratus furere luctu fili videretur; at idem inflexa ad miserabilem sonum voce,
 cum aetate exacta indigem
 liberum lacerasti, orbasti, extinxti; neque fratris necis,
 neque eius gnati parvi, qui tibi in tutelam est traditus,
 flens ac lugens dicere videbatur; quae si ille histrio, cotidie cum ageret, tamen [recte] agere sine dolore non poterat, quid Pacuvium putatis in scribendo leni animo ac remisso fuisse? fieri nullo modo potuit.

But, as I said, lest this seem peculiar in our case, what can be as artificial as poetry, as the stage, as dramatic plots? Nevertheless, under these circumstances I myself have often seen how from out of the mask the eyes of the performer appeared to blaze at me when he spoke those solemn lines:

Did you dare to abandon him or enter Salamis without him,
 and not fear your father's countenance?
 Never did he speak that word "countenance" without my looking upon a furious Telamon raging with grief for his son. Likewise, as his voice

N.D. 3.79, is that good goes unrewarded and evil unpunished (. . . *nam si curent, bene bonis sit, male malis; quod nunc abest*). Nor does Telamon presume that guidance in moral affairs is available through supernatural means, because he also denounces soothsayers “who, for their own profit, provoke false opinions” (*qui sui quaestus causa fictas suscitant sententias*, *ap.* Cic. *Div.* 1.88; cf. 1.132). To such a sober, unbending figure, Ajax’ suicide might well seem inexplicable: for him it would be more logical to believe that Teucer, a mere concubine’s son, had plotted the death of his well-born brother (*scibas natum ingenuum Aiacei cui tu obsidionem paras*, *ap.* Fest. 218.2 Lindsay). The tragedy, then, examined various manifestations of *pietas*, weighing Telamon’s adherence to a peremptory code of conduct against Teucer’s struggle to determine a proper course of action in the face of contrary demands: *deum me sancit facere pietas, civium porcet pudor* (“duty to the gods enjoins me to act, respect for the citizens prevents me,” *ap.* Non. 160M). As Brooks observes, such a conflict of virtues “must have probed deeply the traditional Roman ideals and exemplars” (266).

Throughout the literary tradition, Teucer’s profile as a grievously wronged but still loyal son remains consistent. His defense against Telamon’s charge that he had murdered his brother was a climactic moment in Sophocles’ *Teukros* and subsequently gave rise to a local Athenian legend (Paus. 1.28.11). From passing remarks in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* (2.23.1398a and 3.15.1416b), it appears that in the same (or perhaps another) powerfully effective speech, Teucer had responded to further allegations of treason brought by Odysseus, turning the tables upon his accuser. Yet, despite his sense of injury, he invariably refuses to act against his father, accepting his banishment with resignation. In the *Tusculans* (5.108), Cicero remarks that a sentiment placed in Teucer’s mouth (*patria est, ubicumque est bene*, “wherever things go well, there is one’s native land”) is a pronouncement upon exile valid for every school of philosophy.²² A generation after Catullus, Horace would draw upon this archetype to fashion his own memorable *exemplum* of Teucer heavily urging his comrades to enjoy themselves during their last night ashore before setting forth as expatriates: *cras ingens iterabimus aequor* (“tomorrow we will revisit the great sea,” *O.* 1.7.21–32).²³

For Telamon, in all of these plays, the final outcome of the course of events is likewise preordained: he is left desolate in old age, without son or grandson to carry on his line. The catastrophe of a house made vacant is also a major preoccupation for the bereaved Catullan speaker. At 68.22, and again, in exactly the same words, at 68.94, he declares that his brother’s death marks, simultaneously, the ruin of their *domus*. To illustrate the depth of Laodamia’s self-destructive longing for her dead husband, he ironically cites the case of a man whose only daughter has just provided him with an

heir, frustrating the *impia gaudia* of a legacy-hunting relative (68.119–24).²⁴ If we, as readers, perceive the obvious contrast between the happy new grandfather and the bereft Telamon, and then parallel Telamon's situation with that of Catullus' father, the subjective emotional repercussions for the speaker himself emerge as deeply ambivalent and painful.

To an audience conversant with earlier epic and dramatic tradition, these strategies of intertextuality would have therefore cast substantial light on Catullus' state of mind, hinting at the nagging, if irrational, responsibility he feels for his brother's death and his consequent sense of moral obligation to his living kin.²⁵ Of course, the full impact of these reverberations would not be experienced all at once, even by a highly sensitive reader. At this point it would be sufficient for the text's purposes, though, if the geographical location of the brother's grave were to trigger a preliminary recollection of Ajax, or more precisely, in the context of fraternal grief, of the strong attachment between Ajax and Teucer. The full emotive dimensions of the typological parallel will emerge, as we will see, in 68, largely in conjunction with another mythic analogue, the tale of Laodamia.

Let me posit, finally, that this single detail, the location of Catullus' brother's grave, operates in poem 65 as an unusual kind of signifier—to use Barthes' word for it, a *biographème*. According to Barthes, some trivial personal detail embedded, as a novelistic fact, within the text can evoke a vivid if fragmentary impression of its producer, bringing about “un retour amical de l'auteur” that is itself a vibrant part of the text's pleasure (13–14). The polymetrics are studded with such *biographèmes*: they particularize the rhetorical illusion of a lively personality that is, for us, “Catullus.” The poet's Transpadane origins, his contempt for Volusius' *Annales*, his foreign service under Memmius in Bithynia, and his ambiguously situated Sabine or Tiburtine farm (which doubtless provoked Horace to flaunt the subfashionable location of his own Sabine estate)²⁶ are details, tastes, inflections “dont la distinction et la mobilité pourraient voyager hors de tout destin et venir toucher, à la façon des atomes épicuriens, quelque corps futur, promis à la même dispersion.”

In the elegiac poems, such suggestive details abound as well. There, however, in contrast to their function of “authenticating” the speaker of the polymetrics by surrounding him with traces of external reality, they regularly appear to offer a privileged insight into his private mental processes, in the manner we have just observed. One other example is much-discussed: Catullus' lucid recollection of his mistress' sandal creaking on a worn threshold at 68.72.²⁷ Elsewhere, too, I have argued that iconographic and legendary affiliations between the cult statue of Nemesis at Rhamnus and comparable portrayals of Venus permit

Rhamnusia virgo, the formulaic designation for the goddess of retribution employed at 66.71, 68.77, and probably at 64.395, to serve as a recurrent private symbol of “desire gone wrong, bringing disaster in its wake.”²⁸ In the following chapters, we will identify several more *biographèmes* and observe how their implications coalesce to give us a brilliantly realized impression of Catullus’ psychological state.

Sons and Mothers

Poem 65 contains two explicitly inscribed similes: the comparison of the speaker’s forthcoming threnodies to the song of the nightingale and the celebrated sketch of the girl and the forgotten apple that concludes the poem. The general indebtedness of both images to the earlier literary tradition is commonly recognized, although in each case the details of the relationship are contested.

In addition to preparing us for the dirges in 68a–b and 101, the poet’s promise of *maesta . . . carmina* to his brother may be programmatic for the entire elegiac *libellus* (Wiseman 1969: 17–18; King 384). The accredited model for the description of the songs that follows (*qualia . . . concinit . . . Daulias*, 13–14) is Penelope’s likening of her anxieties to the grief of Pandareus’ daughter at *Odyssey* 19.518–23. Catullus’ simile, however, surprisingly combines two variants of the same mythic plot: while the name he gives to the dead boy directly points to the analogy Penelope draws between herself and Aëdon, who slew her son Itylus by mistake, his use of *Daulias* to designate the nightingale alludes to the more familiar story of Procne, wife of king Tereus of Daulis, who killed her son Itys (*not* Itylus) to avenge Tereus’ rape of her sister.²⁹ Earlier scholarly discussion has confined itself to deciding which account is really meant here.³⁰ But the conflation of the two stories in the very same line (*Daulias absumpti fata gemens Ityli*) indicates that *both* are in play and so calls attention to the universality of the pattern.

The woman who slays her son, whether inadvertently or by design, and then, after metamorphosis, forever bewails her loss is one of the most compelling figures in all Greek myth. Penelope’s mention of the tale underscores her own maternal apprehension for Telemachus, betraying a fear that her determined refusal to choose a new husband is exposing her son to grave danger. When poetry is the tenor of the comparison, however, and the nightingale’s song becomes a trope for the poet’s art, this motif takes on a dark, sinister tonality. Nicole Loraux has unpacked the ghastly paradox at its core. The Athenian literary imagination regards the bereaved mother’s grief as the inescapable converse of her wrath. Having turned the rage of a betrayed wife against her son,

. . . cette mère terrible a la figure poétique d'un *paradigme*, le paradigme du rossignol qui fut une mère et chante le double deuil d'avoir tué le fils qu'elle aimait et de pleurer à la fois sur la perte et sur l'acte. Comme si, pour la mère d'un enfant mâle, meurtre et deuil relevaient d'une même logique. (84)

Furthermore, since the nightingale is also the symbol par excellence of the poet, her child's death can be considered a sacrifice to the Muses (φόνον...θυόμενον Μούσαις, E. HF 1021–22). The murder of her own son was required, it appears, in order to furnish the singer with her theme.

In essence, then, the nightingale trope recognizes the emotionally parasitic, or rather predatory, bent of artistic creation. By applying it programmatically, Catullus deepens and complicates the pathos of his lament as he infuses it with guilt. In this simile he identifies himself with the bird whose nature it is to sing, and so proclaims himself a committed artist (Witke 1968: 17–19); but he also assimilates himself to the fierce mother whose sorrow, though heartfelt, is by no means blameless. Self-consciously, then, he gestures toward the poet's tendency to appropriate suffering for his own purposes, and, by transfiguring pain, to falsify truths of human experience.

The most memorable use of figure in 65 is, of course, the concluding simile of the apple that tumbles from the lap of a girl when she jumps up to greet her mother, revealing the existence of a secret lover (19–24). Critics are agreed upon the covert self-referentiality of the image, which appears to offer an elegant resolution of the problem posed by the *recusatio* through its metaphoric assertion of the power of song. Thus, for Witke, the girl's mortified blush represents the quickening of the poet's gift, which will enable him to "sing his brother back into the living world where time cannot destroy art" (1968: 25). Johnston (388) suggests that the sudden manifestation of the apple is like the appearance of the poem itself, emerging abruptly from the mind of its creator despite his original protests of incapacity. For Block, the comparison is programmatic, insofar as the gift (i.e., both the apple and the poem) "rolls forward into the next group of poems, the elegiacs," and thereby "points to the poetry that follows" (50).

But critical consensus about the general import of this figure of speech has not precluded debate over two key issues: the exact referent of each term of the analogy and the intertextual antecedent of the entire passage. First, it is not quite clear what is being compared: is the tenor of the simile the *carmina Battiadae* Catullus sends Hortalus, insofar as both apple and poetry are gifts, or the *dicta*, the wish Hortalus had previously voiced, which may appear to have been forgotten, like the apple?³¹ The prior

description of literary compositions as *dulcis Musarum* . . . *fetus* in line 3 encourages us to equate the apple with *carmina*, but that parallel cannot be pressed further: to liken the poet to a secret suitor and the recipient of his verse to the embarrassed girl makes nonsense of the actual circumstances. If we understand the act of forgetting to be the basis of the comparison, the maiden's discomfiture might be thought to coincide with Catullus' shame at neglecting his obligations. However, the poem has already offered an alternative explanation for the delay, and the translation is dispatched precisely so Hortalus will *not* think he has been remiss. While the speaker certainly regrets having to disappoint his addressee, it would be tactless to suggest, if only through a trope, that he feels chagrin at being found out. Evidently, then, the ingredients of the simile do not correspond in simple one-to-one fashion with elements in the framing text.³² Van Sickle correctly identifies it instead as a "Homeric," or epic, figure, which is "responsive to the logic of its own (literary) form and . . . makes its own (symbolic) revelation" (1968: 502–3).

That revelation is achieved through an elaborate appeal to poetic memory. Catullus' simile is widely believed to allude to the tale of Acontius and Cydippe in Book III of the *Aetia* (fr. 67–75 Pfeiffer), in which the youth wins the maiden by tricking her into reading aloud a vow to marry him inscribed on an apple. The common presence of one essential motif—a clandestine courtship in which an apple figures prominently—seems more than coincidental, given the prior mention of Callimachus in line 16. Still, commentators tend to overlook the discrepancies between the two sets of circumstances. In Callimachus, Cydippe binds herself to marry Acontius unwittingly and then conceals what has happened. Her mother is not the agent of discovery. Instead, it is Artemis who ensures that the vow will be kept by causing the girl to fall ill each time she is about to marry. As Syndikus (1990: 197–98) observes, this is a wholly different plot from the one Catullus employs.

It is possible, however, to fix the intertextual citation more accurately.³³ We know from the *Diegeseis*, prose summaries of the contents of some of Callimachus' works, that the scene in which Cydippe reads the writing on the apple was prominently featured in his narrative (*Dieg.* Z.1–5 p. I. 71 Pfeiffer). Although that episode does not survive in papyrus fragments, it turns up in a paraphrase by Aristaenetus, a fifth-century C.E. epistolographer, who used Callimachus' poem as his main, if not only, source (*Ep.* 1.10.25–49):

Αὐτίκα γοῦν, κατὰ τὸ Ἄρτεμίσιον, ὥς ἐθεάσω προκαθημένην τὴν
κόρην, τοῦ κήπου τῆς Ἄφροδίτης Κυδώνιον ἐκλεξάμενος μῆλον,
ἀπάτης αὐτῷ περιγεγράφηκας λόγον, καὶ λάθρα διεκύλισας πρὸ

τῶν τῆς θεραπαίνης ποδῶν. Ἡ δὲ τὸ μέγεθος καὶ τὴν χροιάν καταπλαγεῖσα ἀνήρπασεν, ἅμα διαποροῦσα τίς ἄρα τοῦτο τῶν παρθένων μετέωρος ἀπέβαλε τοῦ προκολπίου· "Ἄρα," φησίν, "ἱερὸν πέφυκας, ὦ μῆλον; Τίνα δέ σοι περίξ ἐγκεχάρακται γράμματα; Καὶ τί σημαίνειν ἐθέλεις; Δέχου μῆλον, ὦ κεκτημένη, οἷον οὐ τεθέαμαι πρότερον. Ὡς ὑπερμέγεθες, ὡς πυρρῶπόν, ὡς ἐρύθημα φέρον τῶν ῥόδων. Εὗγε τῆς εὐωδίας· ὅσον καὶ πόρρωθεν εὐφραίνει τὴν αἴσθησιν. Λέγε μοι, φιλτάτη, τί τὸ περιγράμμα τοῦτο;" Ἡ δὲ κόρη κομισαμένη καὶ τοῖς ὄμμασι περιθέουσα τὴν γραφὴν ἀνεγίνωσκεν ἔχουσαν ὧδε· "Μὰ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν Ἀκοντίῳ γαμοῦμαι." Ἐτι διερχομένη τὸν ὄρκον εἰ καὶ ἀκούσιόν τε καὶ νόθον τὸν ἐρωτικὸν λόγον ἀπέρριπεν αἰδουμένη, καὶ ἡμίφωνον καταλέλοιπε λέξιν τὴν ἐπ' ἐσχάτῳ κειμένην ἅτε διαμνημονεύουσαν γάμον, ὃν σεμνὴ παρθένος κἂν ἐτέρου λέγοντος ἠρυσθίασε. Καὶ τοσοῦτον ἐξεφροινίχθη τὸ πρόσωπον, ὡς δοκεῖν ὅτι τῶν παρειῶν ἔνδον εἶχε τινα ῥόδων λειμῶνα, καὶ τὸ ἐρύθημα τοῦτο μηδὲν τῶν χειλῶν αὐτῆς διαφέρειν.

So [addressing Acontius], when you beheld the girl sitting before the temple of Artemis, immediately selecting a quince³⁴ from the orchard of Aphrodite, you wrote a message of deceit all around it and secretly rolled it toward the feet of her nurse. She, struck by its size and color, snatched it up, puzzling at the same time over what girl, as she jumped up [or, absent-mindedly], had lost this from her bosom. "Quince," she says, "are you sacred? What letters are incised all round you? And what do you intend to signify? Mistress, here is such a quince as I have never seen before. How huge it is, how ruddy, how it bears the blush of roses. Glory be for its bouquet! so much that even from afar it delights the senses. Read me what this inscription is, dear girl." The maiden, taking it and scanning it with her eyes, read aloud the writing that said "I swear by Artemis that I will marry Acontius." Still pronouncing what was—albeit both involuntary and fraudulent—an oath, she cast aside the message of love in shame and left the final word half-spoken, because it mentioned marriage, at which thing the modest maiden colored, even though referred to by another. And her countenance reddened so much that it seemed she had a meadow of roses in her cheeks, and their crimson was no different from that of her lips.

Aristaenetus is not always a reliable witness to earlier authors.³⁵ In this passage, however, "the circumstantial case seems very strong" that he worked directly from Callimachus' account, because he employs motifs treated, although more briefly, by Ovid in *Heroides* 20 and 21 (Hunter 180). Acontius plucks the fruit himself (26–27; cf. *Ep.* 20.9); Cydippe's

nurse marvels as she picks it up, then urges her charge to read her the message (29–30, 32–40; cf. *Ep.* 21.109); the girl reddens with shame at the very mention of wedlock (41–47; cf. *Ep.* 20.5–6 and 21.111–12).³⁶ These parallels imply that Aristaenetus is copying the scene rather closely.

Now, for a suggestive indication that Catullus also had the equivalent passage from *Aetia* III in mind, we may cite the word *μετέωρος* (31), which has been glossed as the source for the Roman poet's *prosilit*.³⁷ Twice it is used by Cicero in the derived sense of “forgetful, distracted”: at *Att.* 15.14.4 he describes himself as “*μετέωρος et magnis cogitationibus impeditus*,” “distraught and obstructed by great concerns,” and at *Att.* 16.5.3 Brutus too is alleged to seem *μετεωρότερον*. Since this is such an extended, and otherwise late, meaning for the Greek adjective, it is arguable that Cicero appropriates it from that same famous passage of Callimachus, who would have been punning upon both equally appropriate significances.³⁸ Having no equivalent word in Latin for expressing this twofold meaning economically, Catullus was forced to unpack it, applying *oblitae* to the girl and *prosilit* to her action. This is only a conjecture, to be sure, but it would explain Cicero's utilization of the word, evidently deployed in order to summon recollections of a text familiar to Atticus.

If Catullus is drawing upon that part of Callimachus' narrative, then, the figure of the maiden caught out in an intrigue does not look back to Cydippe's own experiences but rather to the erroneous speculations of her servant. Attention to the likely context of the model changes the tonal register of the Catullan image. With the literary stereotype of the gossip nurse in mind, we may reasonably conjecture that the affair the Callimachean attendant fantasized would have been an illicit one. Consequently, the *sponsus* who sends an apple to the girl in the simile should not be thought of as an official, family-approved fiancé but as a “pledged” lover with designs on seduction rather than marriage.³⁹ By placing the fruit in her bosom, the virgin herself, though still technically innocent (*casto . . . gremio*), unwittingly betrays her susceptibility. An epigram attributed to Plato (*Anth. Pal.* 5.79.1–2) makes this implied scenario plain: τῷ μήλω βάλλω σε· σὺ δ', εἰ μὲν ἐκοῦσα φιλεῖς με, / δεξαμένη τῆς οἷς παρθενίης μετάδος (“I pelt you with an apple. But you, if you willingly love me, take it and give over your virginity”).⁴⁰ Her blush when surprised by her mother is therefore one of genuine culpability, as opposed to Cydippe's loss of composure due to modesty.

Although the mother is not mentioned in Aristaenetus' abridgment, she is prominently featured in Ovid's exchange of letters, where Acontius presses his beloved to tell her mother the whole story (*Ep.* 20.201–18) and Cydippe confesses that she has already done so (21.241–42). However, at the climax of Callimachus' own version, which does survive on papyrus,

it is instead Cydippe's father who learns the cause of his daughter's illness from Apollo. Ovid must accordingly be embellishing the plot of his main narrative with a detail taken from the nurse's fantasy in the *Aetia*, in which the mother would have acted as a coercive blocking figure.

The final visual impression left with the reader is the *consciūs rubor* flooding the maiden's countenance. In Roman society, the blush is the external mark of *pudor*, the ethical emotion mandating submission to cultural norms.⁴¹ Hence blushing is the expected response of an adolescent whose bid for emotional autonomy has been checked. As Lateiner remarks: "The blusher . . . acknowledges her or (less frequently) his obligations to a familial or social aggregate, to which the culprit pledges future allegiance" (185). By blushing, Catullus' heroine concedes her powerlessness in the face of parental authority. The vignette is thus a mini-drama of seduction averted and family honor saved. Yet, in describing her as *miserae*, the Catullan speaker intimates that his sympathies lie with the girl. Her wretchedness is correlated with his own grief.

What has a thwarted seduction to do with the death of a brother? The answer to this question may lie in the very operations of literary figures in general and similes in particular. Susanne Lindgren Wofford's pathbreaking inquiry into the impact of tropes upon the governing ideology of the epic poem establishes that similes, along with other modes of imagery, characteristically bring into textual play a system of values opposed to that prevailing in the master narrative. The "meaning" of a literary work in its totality is produced by an imperfect integration of the opposing implications of figure, on the one hand, and represented action, on the other. Hence epic becomes "an institution that can express and define an entire cultural system while also revealing its contradictions and the costs of its ethical paradigms and political solutions" (1–2). Although Wofford herself describes this dual semantic process in which tropes and figures open variant perspectives upon the immediate situation as peculiar to epic, there is no intrinsic reason why it should not be extended to other genres, and particularly to elegy, which shares numerous features in common with epic.

I propose, then, that the surface meaning of this and certain other Catullan elegiac texts is qualified by embellishing images that remind us of considerations excluded from the main discourse. In poem 65, we have observed three figurative components functioning alongside the narrator's profession of inability to compose an original poem: mention of Rhoeteum, which invokes the mythic paradigm of Ajax and Teucer and the resulting guilt of the survivor; the simile of the nightingale, reminiscent of other literary manifestations of the *mère terrible* turned songstress; and the extended simile of the girl and her apple, whose emotional rever-

berations endorse a romantic preference for true love—even if wrong-headed and doomed to betrayal—over an arranged marriage. Working together, all these figures set up a categorical dilemma for the speaker, who, as a poet, genuinely mourns his brother but, as the last male representative of his line, must come to terms with the obligations imposed upon him by his tragic loss. One of those obligations is that of perpetuating the *familia*. He must therefore choose between the moral claims of his ancestral household in Verona and the attractions of his illusory *domus* and *domina* at Rome. Catullus empathizes with the girl in the simile because his emotional autonomy, like hers, must be subordinated to the interests of the family unit.

It is also important to bear in mind that the granite fact of mortality is as central to the elegiac significance of 65 as it is for epic generally. Here again Wofford's theoretical model provides illumination. Epic narrative, she argues, is linear and teleological: it proceeds from action to fatal consequence. Conversely, figures take the reader into "a timeless, repeating world" where plot is set in motion over and over and resolution can never be achieved. To reach even a momentary agreement between these two forms of narrative compulsion, the epic genre "gives a privileged place to the first of these necessities, the necessity of death, finding in it the principal explanation for why the characters act as they do and for what might give these actions meaning" (209–10).

Applying that paradigm to poem 65, we find Catullus the artist dedicating himself to a single future calling, that of straightforward and incessant lamentation for his brother. The concomitant figures that underscore the depth of his grief and resolve, however, simultaneously remind us—and him—of the diversity of poetic memory and the complexity of poetic language, insisting that, by its very nature, art cannot be restricted to one limited purpose.⁴² In that alternative register of myth and imagery, Teucer forever defends himself against the unjust anger of his father, the nightingale bemoans her murdered son, and the *virgo* stands gazing in horror as the telltale apple rolls across the floor. Each of these motifs is weighted with the recollection of one or more earlier epic, dramatic, or elegiac contexts in which it had performed in a thematically different capacity; each consequently problematizes the Catullan speaker's focus on death as his sole subject. Thus, as a programmatic statement, poem 65 is a self-contradictory paradox because it confronts, head-on, the essentially paradoxical and divided structure of literary meaning. As a *recusatio*, it establishes that the ostensible refusal to engage in poetic discourse may serve, in and of itself, as a trope.

Back to Romulus

In surveying the intertextual and figurative elements of poem 65, I have so far taken little notice of the named addressee, Hortalus, and the request for poetry he is said to have made. Appeals for writing are not merely a literary motif but an ordinary feature of Roman intellectual life, as the correspondence of Cicero proves (White 64–78). Among Catullus and his circle, poetic requests become a game of reciprocity with well-defined rules.⁴³ One author sets the terms of the match by composing lines on a given topic, and his colleague is bound by the obligations of *amicitia* to reply in kind. The classic instance of such an exchange is Catullus 50 (Burgess). Q. Hortensius Hortalus wrote light amorous verse himself.⁴⁴ His *dicta* could therefore be construed as a friendly challenge to take up a specified theme—erotic, naturally—which Catullus declines while including a translation as a polite substitute. The gesture amounts to a retirement from competition.

But the act of offering his work to such an eminent public personality has other ramifications. In the wake of the Social Wars of the 90s B.C.E. and the civil disturbances affecting Italy in their aftermath, strained relations between members of the Roman senatorial class and Italian municipal élites spilled over from politics into other areas of cultural activity, most notably the production of literature.⁴⁵ Using poems 65 and 66 as his principal witnesses, W. J. Tatum explores Catullus' preoccupation with the "potential for unlevel confrontation" inherent in transactions between social superiors and inferiors. Although the topos of the *carmen iussum* signals a literary friendship, the obvious disparity in rank between the provincial poet and the distinguished statesman might lead a cynical outsider to suspect sycophancy, and a Latin rendering of the *Coma Berenices* could invite an unflattering comparison of their *amicitia* to Callimachus' transactions with his royal patrons, the Ptolemies.⁴⁶ While these observations of Tatum are valid, we should nevertheless keep in mind that the speaker implicitly asserts his artistic integrity by proffering an admitted translation instead of the uninspired new verse he might otherwise have cobbled together.

The sense of rupture conveyed by means of the epistolary setting is also meaningful. By virtue of his career and reputation, Hortalus is intimately linked to Rome. As he reports his bereavement to a third party patently unaware of it, too lofty to be an intimate, whose appeal for poetry has come at the worst possible time, Catullus establishes not only his physical distance from the metropolis but his affective disengagement from the life he had led there. It would seem, then, that Hortalus' function in 65 is best explained on rhetorical, rather than simply factual, grounds.⁴⁷ Whether he *did* solicit a composition from Catullus is irrelevant; what is

crucial to poetic meaning are the reverberations of his name. This appeal from the distinguished consular is an indication that the young Transpadane has earned a place in Roman society. Previously at some disadvantage—as in poems 28, 47, and especially 44, where he shows himself patently unsure of his footing⁴⁸—Catullus finally seems to have achieved through his literary talents a firm place in circles frequented by the nobility. Yet, once arrived at Rome, he turns his back upon it.

The act of designating Gellius the addressee of the concluding poem 116 sets up a nexus of situational parallels with 65. His identification with L. Gellius Publicola (*cos.* 36 B.C.E.) is virtually certain, and will be discussed in a subsequent chapter; all that need be said at this point is that Gellius would be immediately recognizable as a member of a distinguished consular family, “indisputably and formidably *nobilis*.”⁴⁹ In each poem, then, Catullus contemplates sending Callimachean verse, *carmina Battiadae*, to a Roman aristocrat. On both occasions the speaker calls attention to the rational effort demanded by literary production: in 65.3–4 his *mens animi*⁵⁰ cannot supply (*expromere*, “bring forth from a storeroom”) the fruits of the Muses, and in 116 his *animus* is literally “on the hunt” (*venante*) as he earnestly searches (*studiose . . . requirens*) for a way to placate the hostile Gellius with the outcome of his *labor* (5).⁵¹ One type of poetry is then replaced by another, for 116 observes, even more closely than 65, the standard conventions of the *recusatio* (Dettmer 1997: 223). But, martial imagery notwithstanding, the genre ultimately settled upon is not invective iambics but Ennian epic.

Abnormalities in 116, both archaisms and prosodic anomalies, are frequently remarked. *Uti* for *ut* (2) is rare after Cicero (OLD s.v.). Besides containing an old form of the ablative (*qui* for *quibus*), line 3 is the only entirely spondaic hexameter in Latin poetry after Ennius. The elision of final-s at the conclusion (*dabi’ supplicium*, 8) is unexpected, considering that Cicero (*Or.* 161), writing in 46 B.C.E., states that this metrical device is now considered *subrusticum*, “boorish,” and has been repudiated by the neoterics (*ita non erat ea offensio in versibus quam nunc fugiunt poetae novi*). One widely accepted justification for these peculiarities is that Catullus is caricaturing stylistic faults in Gellius’ own epigrams, which were presumably deployed in an invective exchange between the two men.⁵² Wiseman has now advanced a different theory: the poet is proclaiming a change of genre, announcing his intent to attack Gellius in mimes (1985: 183–89). Evidence provided for this assertion, however, is only that the holospondaic line 3 could be read as an iambic senarius, albeit “without the defining sixth-foot iamb.” That latter contention appears strained.⁵³

An obvious allusion to the *Annales* points us in a new direction. In the first book of his epic Ennius had retold the tale of the origins of Rome,

including Remus' death at the hands of his brother Romulus for insultingly leaping over Romulus' newly built city wall. Scholars have recognized the words put in Romulus' mouth immediately before the fratricide (1.94–95 Skutsch) as the source for Catullus' concluding phrase *tu dabi' supplicium*:⁵⁴

Nec pol homo quisquam faciet impune animatus
hoc nec tu: nam mi calido dabis sanguine poenas.

By god, no man alive will do this scot-free, not even you: for with your
hot blood you will pay me the penalty.

The thrust of this intertextual citation has been explained as either artistic or, alternatively, political. On the one hand, it has been proposed, Catullus is setting up Ennius as a “deliberate foil” to Callimachus (Zetzel 1983: 257). By reverting to Ennian prosody, he could even be dissociating himself from Callimachean poetics.⁵⁵ The unusual metrical and linguistic features of the epigram appear to support that hypothesis. On the other hand, the speaker can also be said to reintroduce “the problematic of the *amicus inferior*” by assuming “the role of Rome’s violent founder” and thereby degrading the *nobilis* Gellius to second-class status.⁵⁶ There is a point where these two sets of implications converge. While I am admittedly moving into the realm of speculation, it may be illuminating to take the analysis one step further.

At the beginning of this chapter, I discussed the view that poem 116 responds, as a closing poem, to the dedicatory epistle 65. Other scholars have identified the reiterated expression *carmina Battiadae* as a ring-composition marker furnishing strong textual support for this contention. Circumstantial parallels, such as the contemplated presentation of highly polished verse to a man of greater rank, reinforce the link between the two texts. More compelling still, in the context of a closing dedication thought to be “inverted,” is the shift in the depiction of brotherly relationships from a personal bereavement infused with strong undertones of guilt to the primordial fratricide at the moment of Rome’s foundation. For Catullus, the legend of Romulus and Remus is steeped in both historicity and topical meanings.⁵⁷ Citizens of Rome are, first of all, the founder’s descendants, the *gens* or *nepotes Romuli* (34.22–24; 49.1). But leading men who abuse subordinates are termed “insults to Romulus and Remus” (*opprobria Romuli Remique*, 28.15); Mamurra’s protector is a “pathic Romulus” (*cinaede Romule*, 29.5, 9); and Lesbia, pictured as a streetwalker plying her trade on corners and in alleys, has for customers “the posterity of greathearted Remus” (*magnanimi Remi nepotes*, 58.5),⁵⁸ whose degradation is underscored by the ironic epithet attached to the name of the lesser brother. Such politicized references convey, of course, somber implications of contemporary civil strife and mob vio-

lence. Layering national myth, with all its painful echoes of the attendant crisis in government, upon private tragedy expands the controlling theme of the *libellus*, permeating it with political and moral urgency—indeed, with an entire set of values and assumptions integral to the construction of a pointedly Roman, as opposed to provincial, identity.

Here we should pause for a moment to consider the topical allusion to Ennius against the background of the author's own sense of cultural identity and view it in the context of his larger enterprise of social criticism. Throughout his poetry, Catullus appears to regard himself sometimes as Italian, at other times as Roman.⁵⁹ Implicitly in poems 1 and 31, and quite explicitly at 39.13, he proclaims himself a *Transpadanus*, and therefore an outsider; but in 68a he insists that his *domus* is at Rome (34–35), and in certain other short poems, especially the attacks on Caesar, Mamurra, Piso, and other leading politicians, he is able to adopt the perspective and voice of a dissatisfied resident of the capital. In terms of subjectivity, that psychological “dual citizenship” enables him partially to distance himself from the value-systems of both his native and his adopted communities. No one, of course, is able to position himself outside ideology, and I will not claim that the speaker's stance is independent of standard élite moralizing discourses; but it does seem that his equivocal position allows him to survey each milieu, the provincial and the cosmopolitan, through the eyes of the other and so to become a keen observer and critic of both.

That Catullus furnishes a critique of contemporary mores—not only in the expressly didactic conclusion to his “Marriage of Peleus and Thetis” (64.382–408),⁶⁰ but by his very self-presentation as speaker in many of the shorter poems—has been something of a scholarly truism ever since Quinn in 1972b divided the corpus into two categories, the “Lesbia poems” and the “poetry of social comment” (49–50) and claimed that the latter were included to provide “a picture of the way of life of a section of society” as a background to the dominant theme of the affair (206). Subsequent studies have refined this line of inquiry and extended it in several directions: by emphasizing the depth of moral commitment Catullus brings to his analysis of social problems (Wiseman 1985: 92–129; Martin 121–45; Vinson 1989, 1992); by contending that the poems on Lesbia, as figurative political statements, play an essential role in his critical project (Ross 1975: 8–15; Skinner 1997a [1993]: 143–45); by exploring the ways in which Catullan rhetoric deconstructs the newly honed tools of professional oratory (Selden 1992) or appropriates and then defamiliarizes terms of aesthetic approval circulating in the political sphere (Krostenko 233–90, esp. 287–90). In the most recent and provocative treatment of this issue, Nappa (2001: 18–35, cf. 151–62) defines the Catullan poetic persona as a fictive construct responding to the constraints of public scrutiny and the ubiquitous Roman assumption that

style of clothing, behavior, speech, and literary production constitute “an aesthetic confession of ethical truth” (20). By fashioning a self-representation at odds with norms of upper-class male conduct, the author is able to mount a sustained inquiry into the tensions and contradictions surrounding patronage relationships, marriages of political convenience, social advancement, and popular artistic success during the last decade of the Republic.

Given that growing recognition of Catullus’ interest in public affairs, I would construe poem 116 as a delayed admission that poetry written under the aegis of Callimachean poetics is at present a labor undertaken in vain.⁶¹ It cannot achieve its communicative ends within the deteriorating Roman social order—personified by the hostile *nobilis* Gellius, whose moral failings, as the sequential reader would recall, have been graphically exposed in previous epigrams. With this closing reference to a defining moment in the *Annales*, Catullus instead gestures toward a traditional poetics imbued with ethical certitude—the certitude of *mos maiorum*. As we consider the further consequences of his repudiating Callimachean aesthetic principles in favor of those of Ennius, we may also find a possible reflex of debate between adherents of Stoicism and contemporary Epicureans over the Stoic, but also fundamentally Platonic, doctrine that poetry, to be judged good, must promote the good of society.

In the *Republic*, Plato concludes his first interrogation of verse as a source of harm to the young (2.376e–3.398b) by decreeing that the poet whose compositions entertain but do not teach right conduct will have no place in the ideal state, whereas the “more crabbed and unpleasing poet” (τῷ αὐστηροτέρῳ καὶ ἀηδεστέρῳ ποιητῇ) will be given a hearing “for the sake of utility” (ὠφελίας ἔνεκα, 3.398a–b). The Platonic antithesis between the pleasure literature affords and its educational value continued to play an essential part in philosophical exchanges over poetic utility during the Hellenistic period and later: arguments on both sides were crafted with the *Republic* in mind (Asmis 1991: 9–10).

Plato’s objections to art were still a central theme of aesthetic debate in first-century B.C.E. Rome. Having cited Greek models to justify his practice of studding philosophical discourse with poetic quotations, Cicero at *Tusculans* 2.27 frames a parenthetical indictment of poetry based on *Republic* 10.605c–e, where, with the dialogue drawing to an end, moral objections to art voiced earlier are reiterated. When a grieving Homeric or tragic hero, Socrates there observes, delivers a long speech of lament, sings an aria, and beats his breast, the best of us as we listen “take pleasure and giving ourselves over we follow along in sympathy” (χαίρομέν τε καὶ ἐνδόντες ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς ἐπόμεθα συμπάσχοντες), and we enthusiastically praise the poet who most transports (διαθῇ) us in that way. In our own lives, though, we pride ourselves on manly forbearance; is it well done, then, to

delight in watching conduct we ourselves would repent of? Cicero, in turn, repeats the same objection and then appeals directly to Plato's authority:

Sed videsne, poetae quid mali adferant? Lamentantis inducunt fortissimos viros, molliunt animos nostros, ita sunt deinde dulces, ut non legantur modo, sed etiam ediscantur. Sic ad malam domesticam disciplinam vitamque umbratilem et delicatam cum accesserunt etiam poetae, nervos omnis virtutis elidunt. Recte igitur a Platone eiciuntur ex ea civitate quam finxit ille, cum optimos mores et optimum rei publicae statum exquireret.

But do you see what harm poets cause? They bring on stage the bravest men lamenting, they weaken our souls, and besides they are so pleasing that they are not only read but learned by heart. And so when poets have been added as well to bad familial upbringing and a sedentary and sumptuous life, they crush all the vigor of manly virtue. Rightly, then, they are cast out by Plato from that commonwealth he devised when he was inquiring into the best customs and the best constitution of the state.

Philodemus' attacks in his treatises *On Music* and *On Poems* upon advocates of a moral standard for evaluating poetry offer additional evidence that the issue was hotly contested in Catullus' lifetime. The extreme position taken by champions of the moral usefulness of poetry is represented by the Stoic philosopher Cleanthes, who maintained that the power of poetic diction could bring listeners closer to the acceptance of truth than philosophical prose (Sen. *Ep.* 108.10). Philodemus counters by arguing that the pleasure of the sound and the unnatural arrangement of the words create distractions, actually weakening the moral impact of the thought (*On Music* IV col. xxviii.16–35 Neubecker). In *On Poems* V, he dissociates poetic art from moral usefulness entirely: at col. iv.1–21 Mangoni he posits the existence of excellent poems possessing either no moral value or the potential to cause "the greatest harm in their power." Later he allows that poems may benefit the listener incidentally, *but not as poems*: *κἂν ὠφελεῖν καθὼς ποίηματ' οὐκ ὠφελεῖ* (col. xxxii.17–20 Mangoni). Meanwhile, Cicero's unsympathetic references to the Epicurean dismissal of *paideia* as irrelevant to the good life (*Fin.* 1.25–26 and 71–72) afford a priori grounds for assuming that a defense of poetry's contribution to human welfare—provided it be morally uplifting poetry—was very much a priority among educated Romans.⁶²

To Cicero, Ennius' verse was such a wellspring of ethical truth, as is obvious from his frequent use of it to embellish his own ideological assertions. That he also regarded some literature produced in his own time as at cross-purposes with the older poet's tragic vision of human affairs is implicit in the famous parenthetical observation at *Tusculans* 3.45.1, where

Ennius is defended against contemporary writers characterized as “these minstrels of Euphorion,” *his cantoribus Euphorionis*.⁶³ Philological analyses of Cicero’s descriptive phrase do not always take its context into account: it occurs in the course of an attack upon the teaching, attributed to the prominent Epicurean Zeno of Sidon, that pain brought about by ill fortune can be eased by reflecting upon sensual pleasures, *voluptates* (3.37–38). Tell *that* to a Thyestes, an Aeetes, or a Telamon, Cicero scoffs, quoting lines from Roman drama to illustrate the depths of misery experienced by such legendary personages (3.39–40, 43–44). As his clinching example, he draws upon Andromache’s laments in Ennius’ *Andromacha Aechmalotis*, beginning with two excerpts in which she bewails her loss of husband and country. “You know what follows,” he goes on (3.44):

O pater o patria o Priami domus;
 saeptum altisono cardine templum!
 vidi ego te astante ope barbarica,
 tectis caelatis, laqueatis,
 auro ebore instructam regifice.

O father, o fatherland, o house of Priam,
 temple closed with resounding hinge!
 I myself have seen you, with barbaric wealth at hand
 furnished royally with gold and ivory,
 with ceilings embossed and empanelled.

It is at this point that Cicero interjects *o poetam egregium! quamquam ab his cantoribus Euphorionis contemnitur* (“Superb poet! though he is spurned by these minstrels of Euphorion”).

He then proceeds to comment in passing upon the grim psychological undercurrents of the episode (3.45.2–46.1):

sentit [Ennius] omnia repentina et necopinata esse graviora. exaggeratis
 igitur regis opibus, quae videbantur sempiternae fore, quid adiungit?

haec omnia vidi inflammari,
 Priamo vi vitam evitari,
 Iovis aram sanguine turpari.

praeclarum carmen! est enim et rebus et verbis et modis lugubre.

He [Ennius] feels that all events sudden and unexpected are worse. And so to those amassed kingly riches, which seemed to be imperishable,

what does he juxtapose?

I saw all these set aflame,
Priam by force deprived of life,
Jove's altar by blood befouled.

A brilliant poem! for it is somber in theme, language, and meter.

The distinction drawn between Ennius and the *cantores Euphorionis* is therefore grounded upon a fundamental difference in outlook and principles. In addition to overlooking the technical mastery of Ennius, modern writers who pointedly admire and imitate Euphorion are also incapable of appreciating the tragedian's thoughtful grasp of the psychology of human suffering. Like Epicureans, Cicero hints, they lack moral insight.

Euphorion himself treated human misfortune in what would have seemed, by Cicero's standards, a shallow, pretentious, and artificial manner.⁶⁴ Crowther shows that the Hellenistic poet gained his reputation in the area of hexameter narrative and "was known for his obscurity, violence, horror, and for his interest in the unnatural, especially when concerned with love" (325–26).⁶⁵ Three stories credited to Euphorion in the manchettes of Parthenius' *Erotica Pathemata* deal respectively with incest, fratricide, cannibalism, and the heroine's metamorphosis into a bird (xiii: Harpalyce); attempted rape and murder or suicide of the heroine (xxvi: Apriate); and another instance of incest, along with death by mistaken identity and suicide of the heroine (xxviii: Cleite).⁶⁶ In presenting his collection of tales to Cornelius Gallus, Parthenius remarks that Gallus is capable of turning "the most suitable of them" (τὰ μάλιστα ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀρμόδια) into hexameters and elegiac verse (praef. 2).⁶⁷ The kind of Latin contemporary writing Cicero had in mind must have therefore been neoteric narrative elegy and epyllion, which fused Callimachus' pursuit of esoteric topics and mannerist approach to storytelling with the erotic sensationalism that played a dominant part in many of Euphorion's compositions. In a deliberate rejection of the heroic and the sublime, emphasis in such poetry was placed upon shocking or heartrending accounts of betrayed love told from the viewpoint of the wretched female victim. Catullus' epyllion on the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, with its inset tale of Ariadne's abandonment by Theseus, certainly fits within that typology: although it takes its departure from the meeting of argonaut and nymph, its central focus is the arresting scene of Ariadne forlorn upon the beach at Dia and its high point is her long operatic complaint of her lover's treachery (64.132–201).

The content of poem 64 is more wholesome, to be sure, than that of some other specimens of the genre. Cinna's lost *Zmyrna*, an erudite concoction

of forbidden desire, boudoir intrigue, sex, female abjection, and metamorphosis, with the added frisson of a father's seduction by his own daughter, probably marked the most extreme neoteric foray into titillating melodrama and thus the starkest possible contrast to the established poetic tradition.⁶⁸ In poem 95, Catullus' generous praise of Cinna's work and corollary ridicule of Volusius' *Annales*—which, from its title, attempted to imitate Ennian epic by taking Roman history as its theme—suggests that, like Cicero, he locates the poetics of the epyllion at the opposite pole from Ennius' practice. Yet a reading of poem 95 as clear-cut artistic polemic can only be maintained by treating the epigram in isolation. When, in a subsequent chapter, we examine it within its transmitted setting in the *libellus* and with close attention to the epigrams that come after it, we will find that its aesthetic partisanship is immediately qualified by reservations about the effectiveness of art permeating poems 96 and 101. In context, this tribute to Cinna is analeptic and nostalgic rather than forward-looking.

Meanwhile, at the conclusion of the *libellus*, Catullus' abortive intention of using Callimachean *carmina* to "soothe" (*lenirem*) Gellius sets up a tension between "soft" elegiac and "hard" conventional epic verse.⁶⁹ While the combat imagery that follows evokes the martial atmosphere of Ennian annalistic narrative, archaic diction and old-fashioned metrical practices emulate its rhythmic texture. Other Catullan texts associate the *Annales* of Ennius' epigone Volusius with rusticity (*pleni ruris et infestiarum*, "full of the country and vulgarities," 36.19) and north Italian provincialism (*at Volusi annales Paduam morientur ad ipsam*, "Volusius' *Annales* will die no farther afield than the Po," 95.7). In poem 116, accordingly, professed transfer of allegiance from a Callimachean to an Ennian poetics may be read as an analogue for the poet's displacement from Rome to Verona. We should not conclude, though, that the *recusatio* announces plans to turn to a more time-honored style and subject matter. In the wake of mature responsibilities brought on by his brother's death, Catullus is instead renouncing a frivolous neoteric aesthetics.

This farewell to Callimacheanism is situated firmly within the sphere of Roman social relations. Because 65 and 116 are carefully associated as poems of opening and closure, the change in addressees from the venerable Hortalus to Gellius, who has been branded in prior epigrams as disloyal to friends and relatives alike, means that the speaker has reluctantly come to terms with the treacherous politics of advancement. His adoption of a counteroffensive stance toward Gellius, now perceived as an implacable foe, is thus aligned on the literary plane with an embrace of ennobling themes and a grander and more profound aesthetic. How this transformation would have come about—how we have managed to get from Hortalus to Gellius—thereby becomes the import of the elegiac book.

CHAPTER TWO



The Veronese Suite

We have considered the evidence for assuming that Catullus' elegiac collection is framed by parallel opening and closing programmatic statements that designate Callimachus as the primary literary model for an extended poetic project—namely, the *libellus* itself. Now we can proceed to investigate the internal articulation of this poetry book. What would probably strike the ancient reader at once as she scrolled forward from the beginning, perusing each text in turn, is the monumental configuration of poems 65 through 68a–b.¹ Of the pieces that follow, only poem 76 with its 26 lines, as compared to the 24 of poem 65, will approximate any of these five elegies in length. The arrangement of the sequence, moreover, is strictly architectonic. Conforming to the scheme of *variatio*, in which clearly related compositions are set off by presumably heterogeneous ones, two pairs of poems, each a formal verse present accompanied by its transmittal letter, are separated by a comic dialogue between the door of a house in Verona and an interlocutor who probes into the alleged sexual misconduct of the house's inhabitants. The organizational similarity to Catullus 2–11, the opening sequence of the polymetric *Passer*, is evident, for there too a chronologically arranged set of poems on one topic, the speaker's love affair, is interrupted by others ostensibly unrelated. Meanwhile, a web of situational, thematic, and occasionally verbal links forges connections between each elegy in the series and those preceding and following it.² As in the "Lesbia cycle," then, the artificial structure of the elegiac suite calls attention to its semiotic function: placement of the individual poems seems to have been determined by their specific contribution to defining the poetic project. Hence this sequence must be deemed programmatic in its entirety, forming a composite introduction to the whole *libellus*.

According to King (387), the program announced in the five elegies is unequivocally "Callimachean"; that is, all propose to imitate the refined

style and learned content of the *Aetia* and so justify the author's designation of his collection as *carmina Battiadae*.³ The first three poems do indeed show conspicuous Callimachean features. In its structure, 65 is expressly Alexandrian: it consists of a single periodic sentence, which is broken by a digression punctuated in turn with an apostrophe and then terminated, after the train of thought is resumed, by a lengthy simile. This hypotactic construction replicates the discursive movement of the *Coma Berenices*⁴ and, indeed, of Callimachean poetry in general. Separation of nouns from their adjectival modifiers is another scheme characteristic of Hellenistic elegy: among Catullus' *carmina maiora*, 65 shows both the greatest frequency and the most balanced employment of this sophisticated lexical device (Van Sickle 1969: 493). While the emotional tone of the accompanying translation is more poignant than that of the Greek original, Catullus nevertheless strives faithfully to reproduce its exquisite verbal and metrical patterning. Finally, although the salaciousness of poem 67 may seem far removed from his own rarified scholarly interests, this composition is still indebted to Callimachus for the figure of the seemingly dispassionate investigator and the expedient of speaking to an inanimate object about itself, which was employed at least twice in the *Aetia* (fr. 110 and 114 Pfeiffer) and wittily travestied in *Iamb* 9.⁵

However, it proves unexpectedly difficult to fit poems 68a and 68b into this explicitly Callimachean framework. Apart from another address to the speaker's brother in lines 20–24, the progression of thought in the first text is rigorously linear. Its discursive coloring is comparatively plain, at times prosaic; there is little trace of the allusiveness observed in 65 or the verbal and conceptual finesse informing the *Coma Berenices*. As for 68b, it is, to be sure, allusive and convoluted enough—but the fusion of myth and personal confession found there resembles nothing in Callimachus and indeed seems at odds with the Alexandrian poet's detached narrative stance. Furthermore, the system of imagery permeating this poem, which conveys impressions of profusion, accessibility, and general lack of restraint, seems, if anything, anti-Callimachean in its tenor.⁶ In their stylistic qualities, these two texts, despite numerous thematic connections, appear to deviate significantly from the poems immediately preceding them.⁷ Consequently, King's assertion that all five poems in the series emulate the elegiac style and content of Callimachus' *Aetia* does not turn out to be entirely accurate.

In the rest of this chapter, I argue the case for the presence of an alternative poetic program in what I will refer to as the "Veronese suite." As we move from 65 to 68b, we will find Catullus progressively less inclined to observe the aesthetic principles of Callimacheanism and more disenchanted with literature's claim to be a privileged sector of human life. The five individual texts sound with increasing urgency the issue of artistic

truth and its relationship to personal experience. Through a precipitate generic shift and preemptive assimilation of emotionally charged motifs, the anomalous poem 67 becomes the unexpected fulcrum for the entire programmatic trajectory. In the context of a “poetics of closure,” the suite casts a retrospective glance at Catullus’ career that serves, at the same time, as a general pronouncement upon the artist’s contribution to society.

A Poem Is Forever

Applying Emily Vermeule’s evocative metaphor, we may say that ancient poetry, as far back as can be traced, is preoccupied with necromancy, “raising the dead in order to enter into their imaginations and experience, an ordinary and probably necessary human pastime.”⁸ In the Homeric world, song endows the fallen hero with imperishable glory or *kleos*. Later praise poetry such as Pindar’s returns the mythic dead to light in the person of the *laudandus*—the athlete, king, or patron presented as the modern-day avatar of his illustrious forebear.⁹ However, the most explicit, and for that reason most often cited, articulation of the tight notional link between poetry and immortality in the archaic and classical Greek mind is found in Plato’s *Symposium*, in the course of the wise woman Diotima’s analysis of desire (*erôs*). Having defined the aim of *erôs* as procreation “both in body and in soul” (206b7–8), and associated that aspiration with immortality (206e–207a), she distinguishes spiritual from physical procreation: poets and craftsmen who produce original work are examples of those more fertile in soul than body, who bring forth virtue and wisdom (φρόνησίν τε καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετήν), offspring proper to the ψυχὴ (209a1–5). Insofar as they are more beautiful and have a greater share in immortality, such spiritual children are more desirable than ordinary ones (209c6–d4):

καὶ πᾶς ἂν δέξαιτο ἑαυτῷ τοιούτους παῖδας μᾶλλον γεγενέναι
ἢ τοὺς ἀνθρώπινους, καὶ εἰς Ὅμηρον ἀποβλέψας καὶ Ἡσίοδον
καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ποιητὰς τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ζηλῶν, οἷα ἔκγονα
ἑαυτῶν καταλείπουσιν, ἃ ἐκείνους ἀθάνατον κλέος καὶ μνήμην
παρέχεται αὐτὰ τοιαῦτα ὄντα.

And everyone would welcome such children having been born to him rather than mortal children, and looking upon Homer and Hesiod and the other good poets, envies them, because they leave behind descendants of themselves who, being themselves immortal, provide their parents with imperishable renown and remembrance.

Critics who have lately read Catullus 68b as an *apologia* for the author's self-dedication to a literary vocation ground the dichotomy they draw between his poems and the flesh-and-blood children he chooses not to have upon Diotima's pronouncement.¹⁰

Although the cultural bond between song and remembrance weakens with the spread of literacy, Greek authors in the Hellenistic period can still base claims to authority upon their skill at forging a link with what has perished. Thus, Vermeule observes, Callimachus structures a flat rejection of the mythic Underworld (G-P 31 = *Anth. Pal.* 7.524) as a *Nekuia*, ironically assuming the magisterial role of Odysseus interviewing the shades. Because of its ability to mediate between past and present, the craft of poetry is itself shielded from the crippling effects of time and may in turn shield its possessor. At the end of the *Aetia* prologue (fr. 1.32–38 Pfeiffer), the speaker prays to become the delicate cicada feeding on dew, shedding the old age that weighs him down:¹¹

... ἐγὼ δ' εἶην οὐλ[α]χὺς, ὁ πτερόεις,
 ἄ πάντῳ, ἵνα γῆρας ἵνα δρόσον ἦν μὲν αἰίδω
 πρῶκιον ἐκ δίης ἡέρος εἶδαρ ἔδων,
 αὖθι τ]ὸ δ' ἐκιδύοιμι, τό μοι βάρος ὅσον ἔπεστι
 τριγυλῶν χιτῶν ὀλ[οφ]ῶ νῆσος ἐπ' Ἑγκελάδω.
 Μοῦσαι γὰρ ὅσους ἴδον ὀθμαίνῃ παῖδας
 μὴ λοξῶ, πολιοῦς, οὐκ ἀπέθεντο φίλους.

... May I be the slight, the winged one, ah, by all means, so that old age, so that dew—that I may sing while consuming the one, food for the asking from the heavenly mist, and forthwith strip off the other, a burden upon me as heavy as the three-cornered island on deadly Enceladus. [...] For those on whom as children the Muses looked with an eye not askance, when old they do not put aside as friends.

Mortal infirmity can be overcome through the exercise of the creative faculty, and poetic skill is a gift that one may retain for a lifetime. When properly pursued, the vocation of poet compensates its followers for some of the ills of the human condition.

Like his predecessors, Callimachus insists that literary achievement guarantees the artist a degree of personal immortality. The Heraclitus of the famous epigram G-P 34 (= *Anth. Pal.* 7.80) is “long since ashes” (τετράπαλαι σποδιή), but his poems, figured as “nightingales,” live on, and the raptor Hades will not lay a hand upon them: αἱ δὲ τεαὶ ζῶουσιν ἀηδόνες, ἥσιν ὁ πάντων / ἀρπακτῆς Ἀΐδης οὐκ ἐπὶ χεῖρα βαλεῖ.

The metaphor of the *poem*, rather than its composer, as nightingale makes its first appearance here, and the rationale for it, according to MacQueen, is evident: "The distinguishing feature of nightingales, the one thing that makes them different from all other birds, is of course that they alone among birds raise their voices in song *after dark*. . . . The voice of Heraclitus has in his 'nightingales' conquered darkness and death" (52–53). By the same token, the poet continues to bestow posthumous remembrance upon others. In *Iamb* 12, a birthday poem for the baby daughter of the poet's acquaintance Leon, Callimachus tells how all the Olympian gods competed to give the finest present to the child Hebe. Apollo's gift of song prevails over the splendid material trinkets of the other divinities, which, though beautifully fashioned, are subject to Chronos (fr. 202.66–67 Pfeiffer). The author equates his own tribute to Leon's infant with Apollo's present to Hebe; and, since Hebe is herself the goddess of eternal youth, the little girl who receives his offering will remain the child she is in perpetuity.

Daniel Selden concludes an exhaustive investigation of Callimachus' objectives by declaring that the poet perceives a "substantive vacuum" at the center of things: in his envisioned world everything happens fortuitously, "without a guiding hand or any purposeful direction, which means that there, accordingly, can be no real provocation for blame" (1998: 411–12). Within such an arbitrary universe, the artist has all the more reason to step forth as a champion of excellence in his own sphere. Callimachus' faith in the lasting value of his accomplishments¹² and his conviction that poetry is a special calling, requiring hard work and intense commitment from its practitioners, are key ingredients of "Callimacheanism" as a poetic program, for they justify its insistence on perfectionism.

In subscribing to the same high standard of poetic elegance, later followers implicitly affirm that belief in the importance of their vocation. Cinna echoes Callimachus' own praise of his fellow-poet Aratus' *agrupniê*, "wakefulness" (G-P 56 = *Anth. Pal.* 9.507), when he identifies the *Phaenomena* as *Arateis multum vigilata lucernis / carmina*, "verses kept under constant watch by Aratus' lamp" (fr. 11 Courtney), and Parthenius, who is coupled with Callimachus on stylistic grounds in an imperial-age epigram (*Anth. Pal.* 11.130.3–6 [Pollianus]), acknowledges Cornelius Gallus' pursuit of "refinement" (*to peritton*) in the preface to the *Erotica Pathemata*. In the polymetrics, Catullus playfully declares himself a *pius poeta* (16.5) and dismisses his rivals as *impii* (14.7).¹³ But in poem 76 we find the speaker characterizing his ethical disposition as *pius* (2) and solemnly proclaiming that *pietas* before the gods (26). There the poet reveals the gravity with which, for him, such terminology is invested.

However jocular his application of principled language to literary practices might appear in its immediate context, then, it nevertheless provides an important clue to his self-definition as artist.

On its most literal level, the Veronese suite reaffirms the existence of what was seen by more conservative Roman contemporaries as poetry's chief good—its capacity to preserve the memory of great human exploits. That verse can bestow deathless honor upon the individual was by this time so much a truism that Cicero, in defending his client Archias' assertion of citizenship, could ground his argument upon the contention that, in doing so, it enhances the reputation of the state (*at eis laudibus certe non solum ipse qui laudatur sed etiam populi Romani nomen ornatur*, Arch. 22). In that same speech he recounts the exemplary tale of Alexander at Sigeum remarking upon Achilles' great good fortune in having a Homer to publicize his feats. Cicero uses the same *exemplum* in later correspondence when he is urging the historian L. Lucceius to undertake the task of commemorating the high points of his political career (*Fam.* 5.12.7). Nevertheless, the orator did not wait for a Homer to oblige him: his own verse compositions on his consulate and return from exile exhibit his confidence in poetry as a vehicle of posthumous remembrance (M. J. Edwards 1994: 813).

At the opening of the polymetric book, Catullus is highly conscious of the canonizing properties of poetic discourse: when dedicating his *libellus* to Cornelius Nepos, he prays it will last *plus uno . . . saeclo*, "more than one generation" (1.10). Soon thereafter, though, poem 6 reflects upon the process of converting mundane fact into something more idyllic. The speaker declares his intent to transform Flavius' sordid liaison with a prostitute into "delightful verse" celebrating the lovers (*volo te ac tuos amores / ad caelum lepido vocare versu*, 16–17). Witty embellishment of the embarrassing details as they are spelled out is precisely what makes the poem so delightful.¹⁴ Art, it seems, is inherently falsifying: to produce its pleasurable effects, it must necessarily dissemble. In the elegiacs, we will find Catullus returning to the same problem—the ontological split between reality and what poetry has to make of that reality in order to give it everlasting life.

It is obvious that poems 65 and 66 are linked by a common theme of loss transcended aesthetically. Catullus' promise (65.12) to compose *carmina* saddened by his brother's death henceforward is often taken as a description of the following elegiacs and epigrams, written in a meter traditionally associated with lament.¹⁵ The accompanying figure of the nightingale eternally bewailing her son implies he will find no solace for that grief; yet the competent reader may also recall Callimachus' image of Heraclitus' poems as deathless nightingales. Then, in the final simile, the

ruddy blush that washes over the maiden's face (*manat . . . rubor*, 24) replicates the action of the Lethean wave washing (*manans*, 6) over the pale foot of the speaker's brother. Metonymically, this verbal echo restores blood and life to the blanched corpse (Block 49–50). Poetry, through its heightened tropes, can therefore recover what has ceased to exist and fix it in the realm of eternal truth.

An illustrative metamorphosis takes place in the attached translation. Queen Berenice's shorn lock, originally vowed to ensure the safe homecoming of her bridegroom Ptolemy III Euergetes, disappears from its earthly shrine. According to the royal astronomer Conon, it has found a permanent place among the stars as the constellation *Plokamos Berenikes*. By ventriloquizing the complaint of the catasterized tress, Callimachus, the "virtual poet laureate" of the Ptolemaic court, creates a foundation myth for the reign of the sovereign couple.¹⁶ The queen's offering has been recorded for posterity in the astronomical charts; meanwhile, the attendant state of affairs—her husband's triumphant return from war, as well as Ptolemy and Berenice's mutual conjugal devotion—is commemorated in an exquisite *aetion*. "Callimachus may seem to have chosen a somewhat oblique way to celebrate Euergetes' victories," Stephanie West remarks in summing up its reception, "but those who judge the poem artificial and trivial (and this view is not uncommon) should bear in mind that thanks to Callimachus the story of Berenice's dedication will be remembered as long as stargazers continue to find their way round the night-sky by means of the traditional constellations" (66).

When he appends his translation of that elegy, Catullus appears to assure himself of how successful poetry can be at overcoming the destructive effects of time. He and his readers would have encountered the *Coma* initially in Book IV of the *Aetia*.¹⁷ There its honorific placement as the closing *aetion*, pendant to the epinician celebration of Berenice's chariot victory that opened Book III, had accentuated Callimachus' praise of his illustrious patron while minimizing reader sensitivity to the Lock's predicament. Removal of the elegy from the encomiastic context of the *Aetia* shifts its focus by foregrounding the narrating voice. Furthermore, as Koenen points out, the sex of that voice has been changed: the gender of Callimachus' lock (*plokamos*) is male, which enables his separation from the queen's head to serve as the functional equivalent of her earlier separation from Ptolemy Euergetes; but Catullus' speaker is female (*coma*), and the poetic persona here, as in the concluding lines of 65, is aligned emotionally with a feminine sensibility.¹⁸ While the Latin version often replicates technical features of the original, such as prosody and word placement, its pathos is accordingly deepened, making the Lock's plight more urgent, more like that of the poet.¹⁹ This implicit correlation would

seem to reinforce Catullus' hope of endowing his brother with an immortality comparable to that of Berenice.

We find a promise of enduring fame stated even more forcefully in the opening lines of 68b, where it is given as the rationale for composing the poem. In a moment of critical need, the dedicatee Allius had come to Catullus' aid. Gratitude now compels the poet to inform the Muses of that favor and ask for help in transmitting the story of Allius' generosity.²⁰ With their assistance, his benefactor's name will be kept fresh in memory through "forgetful generations" (41–50):

Non possum reticere, deae, qua me Allius in re
 iuverit aut quantis iuverit officiis,
 ne fugiens saeculis obliviscentibus aetas
 illius hoc caeca nocte tegat studium:
 sed dicam vobis, vos porro dicite multis
 milibus et facite haec carta loquatur anus.

 notescatque magis mortuus atque magis,
 nec tenuem texens sublimis aranea telam
 in deserto Alli nomine opus faciat.

I am not able to remain silent, goddesses, about the affair in which Allius helped me or with what great benefits he helped me, lest fleeting time with its forgetful generations cover this zeal of his with blind night; but I will tell you, and you straightway tell many thousands, and make this page speak when it is old . . . and let him be more and more renowned in death, nor let the spider weaving aloft its slender web do its work over the neglected name of Allius.

For all the confidence in the power of verse expressed at the outset, though, this elegy is haunted throughout by fears of sterility and extinction. The *domus* of Protesilaus is "begun in vain" (*inceptam frustra*, 75) because its master dies childless (Janan 121). When the speaker himself laments that his whole house is entombed with his brother (*tecum una tota est nostra sepulta domus*, 94), he expresses anxiety, as we have seen, over the impending end of his own line. Troy, the site of his brother's grave, is also the *commune sepulcrum Asiae Europaeque*, / . . . *virum et virtutum omnium acerba cinis* ("joint crypt of Asia and Europe . . . bitter ash of all men and all virtues," 89–90), and thus an image of collective annihilation.²¹ So, too, is the psychic gulf (*barathrum*) into which Laodamia is plunged by the loss of her husband (107–10):

... tanto te absorbens vertice amoris
 aestus in abruptum detulerat barathrum,
 quale ferunt Grai Pheneum prope Cyllenaeum
 siccare emulsa pingue palude solum . . .

... engulfing you in a great maelstrom, the swell of love bore you down
 into a sheer abyss, such as the Greeks say dries the rich soil near Pheneus
 in the district of Cyllene as the swamp is drained away . . .

The prosaic comparison of her profound suffering to a drainage-hole deflates the atmosphere of high tragedy but—by evoking the idea of an abrupt descent into the very bowels of the earth—paradoxically underscores the ruin of all her hopes.²²

Yet the thought of that bottomless chasm in Arcadia summons up, in turn, a recollection of its reputed builder Hercules (111–16):

quod quondam caesis montis fodisse medullis
 audit falsiparens Amphitryoniades,
 tempore quo certa Stymphalia monstra sagitta
 perculit imperio deterioris eri,
 pluribus ut caeli tereretur ianua divis,
 Hebe nec longa virginitate foret.

... which on one occasion the falsely filiated son of Amphitryon is said to have dug by quarrying out the heart of the mountain, at the time when with a sure arrow he overcame the Stymphalian monsters on the orders of a lesser master, so that the threshold of heaven might be trodden by more gods, and Hebe not remain in protracted virginity.

Hercules, the cultural hero who resolutely undertakes ordeals and finally achieves divinity, holds out the prospect of escape from physical extinction. He and his Olympian bride Hebe, goddess of youth, play a vital role as foils to other, less fortunate couples: Protesilaus and Laodamia, Paris and Helen, Catullus and Lesbia (Tuplin 133–36). Indeed, Hercules' superior technological feats and his ability to transcend the limits of gender and mortality make him, according to recent criticism, a positive model for the creative artist whose intellectual products take the place of flesh-and-blood children. Ring-composition rounds off the mythic digression: a second mention of *barathro* . . . *illo* at 117 fashions a link between this metaphoric term of comparison and the ensuing sketch of the old man and his late-born grandchild. Hence, according to Janan, the hero's "potential for creative autonomy" can

open out, through these interconnected tropes, into an image of such potentiality realized, with the infant serving as a figure for the production of poetry.²³

By meditating upon the *exemplum* of Hercules' trials, anguish, and eventual apotheosis, Catullus appears to arrive at a renewed commitment to his artistic vocation. In the *envoi*, he designates his elegy an offering (*munus*) in exchange for services rendered while again stating his firm intent to perpetuate Allius' memory (149–52):

hoc tibi, quod potui, confectum carmine munus
 pro multis, Alli, redditur officiis,
 ne vestrum scabra tangat robigine nomen
 haec atque illa dies atque alia atque alia.

This gift fashioned of song, such as I could do, is rendered to you, Allius, in return for many benefits, lest this and the following day, and another after another, touch your name with flaky rust.

An oppressive consciousness of relentlessly passing time produced by the series of elisions and multiple repetition of *atque* in line 152²⁴ is alleviated by the hope that the gods will add their own *munera* to the speaker's gift in recognition of Allius' *pietas* (*huc addent divi quam plurima, quae Themis olim / antiquis solita est munera ferre piis*, 152–53). That entreaty, in turn, unfolds into a general benediction upon all parties (*sitis felices*, 155), which, although desperately corrupt at line 157, unequivocally expresses “the prayer that Allius and his *vita* may find happiness, as he also prays in the same terms for Lesbia and himself” (Bright 1976: 108). Writing seems the rediscovered means of ensuring that happiness: through creative achievements, his personal equivalent of Hercules' labors, the poet will affirm life in the midst of pain and transmit his own name, along with that of Allius, to his future readers.

Giving the Lie

Immortality attained through verse—poetic catasterism, as it were—is thus a governing principle of the Veronese cycle. Yet the texts we are discussing also show how verse, in exerting its catasteristic energy, necessarily distorts what it attempts to preserve. In the frivolous poem 6, lack of fit between reality and representation was itself the point of the joke. Bleakly confronting privation in poem 65, however, the bereaved speaker casts about for some absolute truth to cling to and finds it in the endur-

ing love expressed through song: *numquam ego te . . . / aspiciam posthac? at certe semper amabo, / semper maesta tua carmina morte canam* (10–12).²⁵ But we have already seen in the previous chapter how a calculated manipulation of the affective properties of language, here and elsewhere in the poem, contradicts his initial assertion of poetic incapacity and so casts doubt upon his sincerity at this precise moment. Furthermore, though artifice and emotion may work together harmoniously as textual components of 65, notionally they are converted into irreconcilable opposites by the *recusatio*, which puts *cura* and *dolor* at odds with the operations of the *mens animi* (Hutchinson 301). Thus the programmatic declaration, meant of course in all earnestness (*certe*), is still rendered extravagant by its surrounding context of self-conscious rhetoricity.

We do not know whether Catullus was familiar with the intricate set of cultural issues to which Callimachus, as encomiast, was responding in the *Coma Berenices*. Yet in any case he, like any Roman reader sensitive to Greek nuance, would have readily appreciated the delightful literary mockery of the original. Callimachus' handling of the Lock's distress was nothing if not arch: through parody, he carefully distanced his well-known authorial persona from the character of the grieving protagonist. By placing in the mouth of a male speaker those traditional formulas of female lamentation lately popularized in Erinna's celebrated *Distaff*, he undercut their intrinsic poignancy, provoking audience amusement rather than empathy; and he rendered the parodic intertextual link even more comical by imposing on the text, in addition, his own idiosyncratic discursive style.²⁶ On reflection, then, Catullus' choice of this particular *carmen Battidae* for translation seems to require explaining.

Furthermore, the friction created by the physical juxtaposition of 65 and 66 disturbs the sequential reader. That it interferes with the psychological frame of reference established in the letter to Hortalus is indisputable. It even changes earlier impressions of the original Greek text: the rupture between the "confident professionalism of the Alexandrian court poet" and the "troubled windings of the covering letter" casts the *Coma Berenices* in a more cynical light, "raising the issues of sincerity and obligation in ways that are foreign to the spirit of Callimachus" (Fitzgerald 196). James Tatum proposes that 65 and 66 should be read as an "ensemble" in which Catullus' unhappiness is meant to pose a subversive challenge to Callimachean wit (442–43). But that is not a satisfying explanation, either; in response, Feldherr (108–9) objects:

Certainly a tension exists between the subjective expression of personal sorrow by the speaker of 65 and the subsequent poem's studiously Alexandrian treatment of a suffering whose triviality is constantly rein-

forced by the inflated gravity of the language that describes it. But to remove that tension by privileging the “real” sorrow of the poet seems to me to oversimplify the effect of the poems. Such a reading removes the darker possibility that, far from being an intrusion to be read past, the humor of the lock’s speech in fact problematizes our understanding of the persona’s own expression of grief in 65.

We are left, then, with a troublesome obstacle to understanding how the two paired elegies can be read in conjunction. Instead of enhancing Hortalus’ appreciation of the disconsolate speaker’s continued esteem for him, the Callimachean translation seems to cast doubt upon the misfortune that supposedly caused it to be sent. Critics have attempted to deal with this puzzle by drawing 66 into a closer thematic relationship with 65 and the other longer elegies. Catullus selected the *Coma Berenices*, they maintain, because its main concerns—conjugal and fraternal love, separation, distress—are recurring preoccupations of almost all the *carmina maiora*.²⁷ Yet, despite repeated—and, for the most part, plausible—efforts to connect the *Coma* with the remaining poems in the Veronese suite, readers still feel compelled to explain away an underlying difficulty: cognitive accumulation of thematic parallels is not enough to overcome the emotional disquiet caused by such a sharp dissonance in tonal register. In other words, there is a gap in meaning here that remains unresolved and continues to arouse reader anxiety.

In the corresponding pair of elegies 68a and 68b, equally arresting gaps arise when the same criterion of commensurability with fact is ironically applied to the respective conventions of discourse ordained for the poetic lover and the encomiast. Like its counterpart 65, 68a is formally a *recusatio* grappling with a conflict between artistic obligation and creative inadequacy. Framed as a reply to a letter sent from Rome, the poem appears to quote at its outset the very phrases of the correspondent (1–10):

Quod mihi fortuna casuque oppressus acerbo
 conscriptum hoc lacrimis mittis epistolium,
 naufragum ut eiectum spumantibus aequoris undis
 sublevem et a mortis limine restituam,
 quem neque sancta Venus molli requiescere somno
 desertum in lecto caelibe perpetitur,
 nec veterum dulci scriptorum carmine Musae
 oblectant, cum mens anxia pervigilat:
 id gratum est mihi, me quoniam tibi dicis amicum,
 muneraque et Musarum hinc petis et Veneris.

The fact that you, overwhelmed by fortune and bitter calamity, send me this *epistolium* written with tears so that I may raise you, a shipwrecked castaway, from the foaming waves of the sea and bring you back from the threshold of death, you whom neither holy Venus allows, deserted in your empty bed, to relax in soft sleep nor whom the Muses delight with the poetry of venerable authors when the distressed mind keeps watch all night—this is gratifying to me, since you say I am your friend, and seek gifts, both of the Muses and of Venus, from hence.

Epistolium, which seems to have the force of a quasi-generic term, is a rare diminutive borrowed from the Greek. It conveys the notion of a short, perhaps playful, dispatch (Fear 250). The noun, almost a *hapax*, does not occur again in Latin until Apuleius uses it of a verse letter jokingly responding to a request for Arabian tooth powder (*e ludicris meis epistolium de dentifricio vorsibus scriptum*, *Apol.* 6) and at the same time quotes Catullus 39.19 on Egnatius' habits of dental hygiene. Apuleius, to be sure, is no good authority for the regular meaning of this or any other expression, but his allusion to Catullus suggests that he may well have recalled the occurrence of the word at 68.2 and appropriated it for an analogous context. If Apuleius did believe the *epistolium* Catullus mentions to have been a kind of *ludicrum*, we have reason to assume that the metaphors contained in the first eight lines gesture toward a kind of verse repudiated in the ensuing *recusatio*.²⁸

Much, if not all, recent scholarship infers that the distraught verbiage summing up the plight of the addressee—let us call him “(M)allius,” for reasons I will explain shortly—is paraphrasing or actually replicating statements in the *epistolium* Catullus had ostensibly received.²⁹ Though I follow this line of reasoning, I do not think (M)allius' own letter has any degree of reality outside the text; as we will see later, there is good reason to deem it a fiction invented to provide a “back story” for the *recusatio*. Previous generations of critics, who assumed that Catullus was replying to an actual document, also took the urgency in the letter-writer's ostensible report of his circumstances at face value: presumably he was crushed with grief over the death of a wife or mistress. Now most readers agree that this language must be taken with a grain of salt: within the scenario, the correspondent has at most suffered a romantic setback.³⁰ It is also probable that the rhetoric of heartbreak invoked here, so familiar from later erotic elegy, indicates that his note should be understood to have been a feigned lover's complaint soliciting, as in 65, an exchange of *munera* (Wray 103–4).

The clash between (M)allius' rhetorical strategies and those employed by Catullus parallels the distinction between the imaginative environment

created by a poem and the actualities it draws upon for its subject matter.³¹ In the lines immediately following the introduction, the speaker applies (M)allius' shipwreck image to his own situation (Tuplin 115), but with a restraint that tactfully corrects the excesses of his correspondent: *accipe, quis merser fortunae fluctibus ipse* ("hear in what waves of fortune I am myself sunk," 13). A nostalgic glance back at early adulthood is broken off with the terse and understated *multa satis lusi: non est dea nescia nostri* ("I played around enough: the goddess [Venus] is not unacquainted with me"). Unlike the apostrophe to his brother in 65, which concludes with the sophisticated trope of the nightingale, its ensuing counterpart here lacks almost all figurative embellishment. The lines that follow, marching through a series of logical steps (*quare*, 27; *igitur*, 31; *nam*, 33; *quod cum ita sit*, 37) to an unqualified rejection of (M)allius' request (*ultra ego deferrem, copia siqua foret*, "of my own accord I would deliver them, were any available," 40), constitute a sweeping repudiation of the imaginative order. The "flattening of discourse" produced by such tactics of causal correlation and subordination ensures that the *recusatio* "functions more as a denial of poeticity than as the denial of a poem *per se*" (Hubbard 1984: 42).

(M)allius, then, has initiated a poetic *ludus*. Claiming that he has been abandoned by his lover, he professes himself devastated, shipwrecked, and sleepless, conditions that automatically create the need for consolatory verse. This opening move is a recognizable neoteric gambit. Using similarly inflated language,³² the distressed speaker of 38 asks his fellow-poet Cornificius for a statement of comfort in the manner of Simonides.³³ Catullus' simulated peevishness there—*irascor tibi. sic meos amores?* ("I'm mad at you; so much for my affection," 6)—might well be adopted, with even more justification, by (M)allius, since Catullus owes him *hospitis officium* (68.12), the duty to reciprocate required of a former guest.³⁴ However, what is in the context of poetic gamesmanship an elegant, if artificial, ploy is undercut when the speaker treats (M)allius' literary sorrows seriously and weighs the demands of the latter against his own familial obligations. The polarities are not of equal value; the fact that we are being asked to consider them in such a light is disconcerting.³⁵ Here is a clear instance of that rupture in perception between an external and a textually structured internal audience that Rabinowitz deems fundamental to literary irony.³⁶

Sarkissian identifies this particular ironic discontinuity as "the first of several dramatizations of the dichotomy between the world that can be represented in verse by studied use of poetic devices and the realities of life which cannot be altered or much mitigated by poetry" (12). For him, one central issue in poem 68 as a whole, which he regards as a unity, is "the conflict between the world a poet can create in his art and the world

in which he must live" (39). Even a separatist reading like mine that takes 68b as an apparent retraction of 68a, that is, as the companion piece that seems to fulfill the request previously denied, cannot sidestep the problem of poetic untruth raised by the *recusatio*, since the express reason for composing the palinode turns out to be an attempt at falsification. One long-standing critical explanation for the scarcely fortuitous similarity in the proper names of the two addressees is that "Allius" in 68b is a paronomasia for "Mallius," the most likely ms. reading of the name in 68a; hence my choice of "(M)allius" to designate the letter-writer.³⁷ The elision *me Allius* at line 41 seems a pointed indicator of such wordplay. Consequently, the almost transparent pseudonym "Allius" should not be considered a means of disguising the identity of this benefactor, but rather of calling attention to circumstances that might well necessitate doing so.

Catullus' praise of Allius' help in lines 41 through 66 is effusive and could even be considered hyperbolic. Five couplets assuring the recipient that his deed will live in memory are followed by an elaborate account of the torments of love the speaker was suffering. His burning passion, we are told, was comparable to the searing heat of Mt. Etna and the scalding waters of Thermopylae; his tears, by implication no less hot than the latter, never ceased to flow. Two ornate extended similes ensue. Each utilizes a standard image for providing comfort—the refreshment afforded by a cool stream (57–62) and the supernatural deliverance portended by a favorable wind after a storm at sea (63–66). Yet, as we will see later, the relationship of these tropes to each other and to the factual setting is very loosely defined and has generated no end of debate. Though the purpose of the first twenty-six lines of 68b seems straightforward, the language raises puzzling questions of tone, relevance, and propriety.

What had Allius actually done for Catullus? In deferring the answer to such a key question, the preamble has piqued the curiosity of the reader and led her to expect a truly splendid display of generosity. When the exact nature of this service is finally specified—provision of a house in which the speaker and his mistress could enjoy what is ultimately admitted to be an adulterous liaison—the anticlimax is palpable, and even, as Holzberg exclaims, "doch zu komisch!" (167). Looked at pragmatically, Allius' good turn can only be branded "pedestrian" and "rather sordid" (Sarkissian 16). Conventional morality would firmly condemn it. In 18 B.C.E. the Julian law *de adulteriis coercendis* made *domum praebere*, knowingly providing a house to enable adultery to take place, an illegal act liable to exactly the same punishments as committing adultery (Dig. 48.5.9(8) [Papinian]). Tacitus records the case of two distinguished *equites*, the brothers Petra, who were tried and executed in 47 C.E. for the

crime of affording a place of assignation for Mnester and Poppaea (*quod domum suam Mnesteris et Poppaeae congressibus praebuissent*, Ann. 11.4.2).³⁸ As an accomplice before the fact, then, Allius must be regarded as no less guilty of adultery than Catullus himself. Indeed, the ostensibly eulogistic line 67, *is clausum lato patefecit limite campum*, “he opened up a closed field with a broad path,” resembles conceptually, if not in actual words, the famous advice to a randy young man offered by a Plautine slave: “love whomever you want, provided you don’t cut a path through a fenced-off area.”³⁹ We must bear in mind that the closed field was another man’s private property.

When Wiseman pleads, “It is precisely because the act was so sordid in the eyes of the respectable world that Catullus takes such care to dress it up with all the magnificence of traditional poetic art” (1985: 160), he drives home the point at issue here. Poem 68b is pressing the Platonic case against poetry as a vehicle of moral untruth (first propounded, as we saw, in the second and third books of the *Republic*, and reiterated at its close, 10.602c–8b) to its extreme. The depth of the speaker’s self-delusion in surrounding his illegitimate affair with the romantic trappings of erotic myth and epithalamic imagery is frequently remarked.⁴⁰ But the wrong being perpetrated by art is even more serious, for it is using the power of heightened language to whitewash and glorify a culpable misdeed. As soon as the reader becomes fully aware of that circumstance, the encomiastic aim of 68b is nullified and the moral quality of the literary endeavor is radically called into question. If the *recusatio* 68a is a denial of poeticity, its companion piece—superficially, but not in actuality, a palinode—is, to some extent, a troubled interrogation of the social value of the poet’s activity *as poet*. We have come a long way from the *pro Archia*, and an equally long way from Catullus’ despairing promise in 65 to enshrine his brother forever in song.

In Fair Verona, Where We Lay Our Scene

Nor is this the last of the trying challenges to interpretation posed by the Veronese suite, for I have left until last the placement of poem 67. Within a series of poems dealing with such momentous issues—death, immortality, guilt and duty, the purpose of art—the presence of a trifling *diffamatio* directed at individuals presumably unknown outside Verona is perhaps the most difficult phenomenon to understand.⁴¹ Formally this elegy is closely associated with the *Coma Berenices*, since in both texts an inanimate thing speaks and the idea of conversing with material objects is modeled upon the practice of Callimachus in Books I and II of the *Aetia*.

Rationales for the poem's position, however, are disappointingly sketchy. In its thematic relation to the elegies immediately surrounding it, 67 is merely "anti-hymeneal" and represents "the dark side of love and marriage" (Most 118; Levine 1985); alternatively, it offers "comic relief from the sad and serious topics of loss and separation" (Dettmer 1997: 143). Attempts at exegesis tend to deal with it in isolation, assuming the historical existence of the persons targeted and the reality of a sordid scandal. Since the details, as reported, are confusing and open to construction in several ways, the poem is described as a "riddle," although a defamatory lampoon, to achieve its purpose of blackening reputations, ought to be easily grasped (Copley 1949: 245). Critics fail to explain why such a lampoon should occupy the most emphatic position in the opening sequence, surrounded by two pairs of matched poems and serving as the central, and thus focal, panel of a triptych. In order to comprehend the programmatic design of the entire arrangement, we must therefore discover the function poem 67 performs and assess the semantic effect of its tonal discontinuity.

With its two distinct and carefully characterized voices, the dialogue with the Door is recognizably a script for oral presentation (Wiseman 1985: 128). In the absence of other textual cues, then, a live audience would tend to identify the unnamed interlocutor with the performer Catullus. He is fictionalized, however, by being given certain salient traits of the narrator who interrogates the Muses in the *Aetia*—most obviously, a persistent curiosity. Consequently, "the poem masquerades as a sort of historical investigation" (Macleod 1983: 191), an analogy all the more pointed because Catullus is not, like the Callimachean aetiologist, researching exotic rites conducted at out-of-the-way places but instead digging up dirt in his own backyard. Here, as in poem 17, another performance script concerned with life in Transpadane Gaul, the poet depicts himself as native-born spokesman for a provincial culture on the outer fringes of Roman cosmopolitanism. For her part, the Door's confidences neatly conjure up the stuffy little ambience of a country town whose inhabitants have nothing better to do than speculate about the neighbors' behavior (Fitzgerald 205–7).

The researcher begins his fieldwork by addressing the prospective informant solemnly (1–3):

O dulci iucunda viro, iucunda parenti,
salve, teque bona Iuppiter auctet ope,
ianua . . .

O gratifying to a sweet husband, gratifying to a parent, hail, and may
Jupiter bless you with good increase—Door. . .

Quasi-epithalamic language leads us to believe that traditional benedictions and wishes for fertility are being conferred upon a bride.⁴² Discovering, as we do in the third line, that the addressee is instead a house door jolts audience expectations. The immediate proximity of poem 66 makes the trick played upon the reader even more effective. Toward the end of her soliloquy (66.79–88), the Lock had instituted a nuptial rite, commanding young brides to pour offerings of perfume to her from onyx jars as a demonstration of their chastity. In the surviving text of the Callimachean original, no corresponding section appears, and the *action* also seems to interrupt the prior train of thought.⁴³ Scholars suggest that Catullus inserted these lines on his own, either composing the passage himself or extracting it from another poem by Callimachus.⁴⁴ It is possible that the insertion was made at the time the book was organized in order to create false anticipation in the sequential reader, who would assume at first that the addressee was one of those newly married women previously admonished by the Lock. The subterfuge makes it clear that a mood of romantic fantasy no longer prevails.

Indeed, the following spirited exchange between the two principals indicates that the atmosphere has changed considerably. Rumor has it, the visitor goes on, that you served old man Balbus well (*Balbo dicunt servisse benigne*, 3) when the house was in his possession; on the other hand, after he died and you were “made a wife,” they say you served his son wickedly (*ferunt rursus nato servisse maligne / postquam es porrecto facta marita sene*, 5–6).⁴⁵ Tell us why you’re reported to have abandoned your old loyalty . . . ? Despite her professed desire to please her newest owner Caecilius (*ita Caecilio placeam, cui tradita nunc sum*, 9),⁴⁶ the Door is quickly wheedled into divulging the disgraceful facts. First she objects angrily to the interlocutor’s charge: “It’s not my fault, although everyone blames me.”—Then tell your side of it. “Nobody asks or makes an effort to know,” she pouts.—We want to know; go ahead and tell us. The tacit contrast between Callimachus respectfully questioning the dignified Muses and Catullus placating the aggrieved Door is wryly amusing.

And so the informant draws a deep breath and begins. Her narrative is predictably racy but maddeningly confusing in its details (19–28). The son of the elder Balbus brought home a woman from nearby Brixia who was reputed to be a virgin. Not so:

Primum igitur, virgo quod fertur tradita nobis,
 falsum est. non illam vir prior attigerit,⁴⁷
 languidior tenera cui pendens sícula beta
 numquam se mediam sustulit ad tunicam;
 sed pater illusi gnati violasse cubile

dicitur et miseram conscelerasse domum,
 sive quod impia mens caeco flagrabat amore,
 seu quod iners sterili semine natus erat,
 ut quaerendum unde <unde> foret nervosius illud,
 quod posset zonam solvere virgineam.

To begin with, then, that it's said a virgin was given to us—that's untrue. Her first husband (whose dirk, hanging limper than a young beet, never raised itself to mid-tunic) wouldn't have touched her [alternatively: her husband wouldn't have touched her first, or beforehand]; but his father, they say, violated the cheated son's bedroom and completely polluted the poor home, whether because his evil heart was blazing with blind love or because his son was impotent, with barren seed, so they had to look one place or another for something more sinewy that could loose her virgin knot.

In line 20, the phrase *vir prior* has provoked a long and still unsettled debate. Did the woman have a "first husband" in Brixia whose own father usurped his marital rights? Or was it young Balbus himself who was impotent and consequently did not touch his wife "first," before the elder Balbus did, or "beforehand" (i.e., before the marriage)?⁴⁸ There are good arguments on both sides.⁴⁹ Macleod's objection to the "first husband" hypothesis appeals to common sense: it "introduces a pointless complication and takes all the sting out of *virgo quod fertur tradita nobis falsum est* (19–20); if the woman had been married before, no-one would ever have supposed she was a virgin when she married Balbus" (1983: 188). Others (e.g., Levine 1985: 66–67 with nn. 20–22) contend that the woman's previous marriage further defames her by making her fall short of the Roman ideal of the *univira*; that Brixia's familiarity with the sordid details of the *ménage à trois* shows it happened there; and that a disquieting rumor of virginity would circulate only if a woman should *not* have been a virgin.⁵⁰ I will leave that issue unresolved, since it does not affect my thesis; we can be confident, at any rate, that the worst possible construction has been put upon everything. The Door concedes that the husband couldn't have deflowered her, given the known fact of his sexual inadequacy; but (again according to report) his father did. On her own account, as the indicative mood connotes, she advances two likely motives—lust, dignified by florid clichés (*sive quod impia mens caeco flagrabat amore*, 25), or the practical need to consummate the marriage and get an heir by any means available (*seu quod iners sterili semine natus erat*, / *ut quaerendum unde <unde> foret nervosius illud*, 26–27). The strong emphasis she places upon the second option tells us which explanation, in her view, is to be preferred.⁵¹

At this point the interlocutor breaks in, expressing caustic admiration for this excellent father who displayed “wonderful *pietas*” (29) toward his son by defiling the son’s wife. But the Door is now too wrapped up in her exposé to be distracted. Brixia, she adds, says it knows all about this affair, and also about two men, Postumius and Cornelius, with whom the matron afterward committed adultery. Still, how would she, the door of a house in Verona (*Veronae . . . meae*, 34), be aware of scandals in Brixia? Well, she learned such information from her mistress, whom she overheard talking to her maids and dropping names (*nomine dicentem quos diximus*, 43). Among those names is that of someone the Door is afraid to specify, who has had his own brush with notoriety (45–48):

praeterea addebat quendam, quem dicere nolo
 nomine, ne tollat rubra supercilia.
 longus homo est, magnas cui lites intulit olim
 falsum mendaci ventre puerperium.

. . . furthermore, she kept mentioning a certain person whom I don’t want to refer to by name, lest he raise his reddish brows [in anger]. He’s a tall fellow on whom a false delivery from a deceitful womb formerly inflicted a major lawsuit.

Unlike the intrigues with Postumius and Cornelius, this relationship was apparently of longer duration (*addebat*, 45). Furthermore, the anonymous individual is, presumably, in a good position to learn of the Door’s talebearing as well as a particularly hotheaded type; hence her belated discretion.

Now, if we become too engrossed in the lurid sexual misbehavior here, we miss the equally intense concern with procreation and transmission of property. The speaker had begun by expressing his hope that the household of the Door will be blessed with progeny. When old Balbus dies, his dwelling passes first to his son and then to a third party, Caecilius: the marriage with the woman from Brixia did not produce an heir. Whoever her father-in-law was, his efforts to impregnate her were unsuccessful, while the husband has already been dismissed as *iners sterile semine* (26). As for the tall man, he himself was allegedly mixed up in a swindle involving a pretended pregnancy with a view to claiming an inheritance (Kroll 218).⁵² The imputation is a timely one, for, between the later 70s and 66 B.C.E., a change in the praetorian edict, specifically the introduction of the clause *unde cognati*, allowed blood relatives of the deceased on either side to supersede members of the wider *gens* as claimants to the estate in cases of intestacy (Gardner 25–34). Like the rest of the actors in the sketch, the

nameless man lacks offspring; in order to take advantage of a legal provision intended to protect the rights of close family members, he had therefore resorted to a ruse, which failed. Sexuality, in poem 67, is not merely transgressive: for all parties concerned, it is barren.

As the capstone of an indictment of infidelity, greed, and deceit, this disclosure of attempted fraud and a subsequent lawsuit depends for its climactic effect upon positive revelation of the auburn-haired man's identity. The Door's report of the fellow's physical appearance is, as Macleod notes, a rhetorical strategy for proclaiming it indirectly.⁵³ He rightly perceives that the economy of satire demands the implication of someone already involved in the poem's action, not an unknown outsider.⁵⁴ Accordingly, Macleod proposes the Caecilius who is now the Door's master, on the grounds that he is "[t]he only person whom poem 67 offers us to attach to the description of lines 45–8." But that is obviously a counsel of desperation, for we have not been previously informed that Caecilius, or any other character mentioned in the text, was tall and auburn-haired. It is more reasonable to suppose, instead, that a listening audience was being invited to use its own eyes. If the poem was orally performed at Rome, the "sting in the tail" would consist in the Door—who has ears and a tongue, as we are told (44), but not organs of vision—giving, unbeknownst to her, a good description of the performer Catullus.

This is not to suppose, of course, that the poet is confessing to illicit sexual intercourse and legal chicanery.⁵⁵ On the contrary. Reiterated, indeed obsessive, attention to general unattributed allegations (*dicunt*, 3; *ferunt*, 5; *feraris*, 7; *dicitur*, 10; *quisquam pote dicere*, 11; *omnes clamant*, 14; *fertur*, 19; *dicitur*, 24; *dicit se cognitum habere*, 31; *narrat*, 35; *populum auscultare*, 39), along with the Door's casual betrayal of her mistress' secrets, implies that the entire story being bruited about is at best hearsay, at worst gossip resting upon shaky foundations. The equivocal, sometimes contradictory, nature of the account points in the same direction: that Catullus' listeners might not agree upon the basic facts of the case after hearing the poem recited—especially if they tried to pick it apart as scholars do nowadays—could be a calculated part of the joke. Thus the conclusion would be appropriately ironic only if the nosy inquirer were to hear himself maligned by what he and his audience knew to be a grossly false accusation.

In its original setting as part of the composer's repertoire, then, poem 67 could be perceived as, among other things, a broad parody of the investigations elegantly carried out in the *Aetia*. Activities in a distant town are the object of inquiry, but gossip takes the place of pedantry.⁵⁶ Allusion to a recent modification in the inheritance laws interjects topical commentary: the change would have affected a good many families and attempts to circumvent it may have caused the same kind of outrage as

the cynical practice of courting the rich and childless in hopes of a bequest (cf. Hor. S. 2.5). Finally, the insertion of self-betraying *biographèmes* involving place of origin and physical appearance undermines the aetiologist's academic stance by embroiling him personally in the reported action.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the elegy is fundamentally good-humored.⁵⁸ As in poem 10, the entertainer Catullus, a well-known figure on the Roman social scene, makes fun of his own public image through an embarrassing encounter: here his stance as literary personality and leading proponent of a Callimachean aesthetic is deftly skewered.

Not Quite Adultery but Adulteration

So much for elucidating what must have originally been a breezy performance piece, arguably a favorite with audiences and perhaps the author's "signature piece." But we have not yet discussed the reasons for its present place in the collection. What happens when this script poking self-deprecating fun at the performer's origins is inserted into a written context dealing with a return to those origins under distressing circumstances? Certainly, as Fitzgerald observes, the interpolation of 67 imposes a sharp sense of cultural displacement upon the sequential reader (206–7). Such an abrupt plunge from the *recherché* court wit of poem 66 to tasteless sexual gossip cannot help but impose a psychological jolt. Shifting the dramatic locale from exotic third-century B.C.E. Alexandria to Verona would make the north Italian town appear even more vulgar and dull, giving additional weight to Catullus' subsequent protest that his true home is Rome (*illa domus, / illa mihi sedes*, "that is my house, my residence," 68.34–35).

The ironies extend further. Positioned as it was within an obviously programmatic cycle, poem 67 would have been recognized as a self-referential performance script by the target audience for the elegiac *libellus*—the contemporary educated readership of Rome—even in the absence of its author. In the context of a written collection, a quasi-autobiographical monologue composed for oral presentation serves the vital purpose of introducing the unfamiliar authorial figure to the reader. Thus in the opening sequence of the *Passer*, setting off the chronologically arranged Lesbia poems, 4 and 10—originally delivered orally in the person of "Catullus"—now inform readers of the poet's Transpadane background and recent military service in Bithynia.⁵⁹ Even if they were not personally acquainted with him and had no idea of his appearance, then, readers at Rome familiar with this practice of arrangement would have guessed that Catullus was the subject of the Door's parting disclosure.

This revelation corrects in advance the emotive extravagances of the *Allius*-elegy, for in 68b, as in 67, marital infidelity is *the* controlling theme. Introduced when Catullus discloses the nature of *Allius'* good deed and offers a retrospective glimpse of his first unforgettable tryst with Lesbia, the illicit affair is glamorized by association with Laodamia's tragic relationship, given wider mythic dimensions through the archetypal adulterous couple Paris and Helen, and, toward the end, scrutinized realistically in a frank, quasi-confessional passage. Not satisfied with him alone (*uno . . . Catullo*, 135), Lesbia commits "occasional trespasses" (*rara . . . furta*, 136) that Catullus pragmatically resolves to tolerate (143–48):

nec tamen illa mihi dextra deducta paterna
 fragrantem Assyrio venit odore domum,
 sed furtiva dedit media⁶⁰ munuscula nocte,
 ipsius ex ipso dempta viri gremio.
 quare illud satis est, si nobis is datur unis
 quem lapide illa diem candidiore notat.

. . . in any case, she did not come to me led by her father's hand into a house fragrant with Assyrian perfume, but at midnight gave stealthy little tokens taken from the very embrace of her own husband. And so that is enough if to me alone (*nobis . . . unis*) is given the day she marks with a brighter stone.

Like the Door's mistress, Lesbia compounds her betrayals. Guilty himself of adultery, her partner has no choice but to curtail his expectations of her faithfulness to him.⁶¹

Although Catullus' beloved was not brought to him as a bride, he clearly thinks of her as such throughout this poem. In a graphic flashback—unquestionably the most momentous *biographème* in the entire corpus—she enters their borrowed *domus* by setting her foot fast upon its threshold (70–72):

quo mea se molli candida diva pede
 intulit et trito fulgentem in limine plantam
 innixa arguta constituit solea . . .

. . . to which [house] my bright goddess betook herself on soft foot and halted, pressing her gleaming sole upon the worn threshold as her sandal creaked. . . .

Lesbia's action, it has long been recognized, inscribes nuptial associations into her entrance and charges them with inauspicious meanings.⁶²

Hallett observes that the Roman marriage ceremony “accorded tremendous, focal importance to the house door” (1980: 109). According to Sarkissian, “it was considered ill-omened for the new bride to come into contact with any part of the door frame as she entered her husband’s house” (17).⁶³ Moreover, Catullus designates Lesbia here as his *diva*. Brenk demonstrates with parallels from *h.Cer.* 188–90 and *h.Ven.* 173–75 that the manifestation of a goddess crossing the threshold of a mortal dwelling “is never without serious consequences, especially if *eros* is near” (1987: 126). For the informed Roman reader, this bridal tableau would carry forebodings of grave risk—subsequently reinforced by mention of Protesilaus and Laodamia’s neglected sacrifice (75–76, 79–80) and Catullus’ parenthetical repudiation of rash acts undertaken in violation of divine will (*invitis . . . eris*, 78). Though he calls upon Nemesis to protect him from such folly, the audience must know it is already too late.

At the moment of Lesbia’s entrance the frame freezes, cinematographically, and dissolves (*ut quondam*) to Laodamia’s union. Fifty-seven lines later, after a montage of episodes—the beginnings of the Trojan War, the entombment of Catullus’ brother, the labors and apotheosis of Hercules, two metaphoric descriptions of the heroine’s obsessive love—we return to Laodamia’s bridal night with her spouse, and thence to Lesbia herself (131–34):

aut nihil aut paulo cui tum concedere digna
 lux mea se nostrum contulit in gremium,
 quam circumcursans hinc illinc saepe Cupido
 fulgebat crocina candidus in tunica.

To her at that time [Laodamia] deserving to yield place not at all (or only by a little), my light brought herself to my embrace. Flitting about her often, hither and thither, Cupid was gleaming bright in his saffron tunic.

The theophanic imagery of this passage repeats descriptive language employed when the flashback began: *candida diva* at line 70 is recapitulated in *candidus . . . Cupido* and *fulgentem . . . plantam* in the following line is now echoed by *fulgebat* (Sarkissian 31). Again Lesbia is figured as a divinity—specifically, now, as Venus with her attendant Cupid (Lieberg 1962: 246–48). Meanwhile, a comparison with the Roman marriage ceremony is underscored symbolically, since Catullus fantasizes the boy-god wearing the saffron-colored garment of Hymen and serving as bridal escort.⁶⁴ For most readers this is a triumphant epiphany: “what predominates is the radiance of the scene,” says Wiseman, “the sense of sudden brightness in the dark”

(1985: 161). Yet human consorts of Aphrodite regularly meet unhappy fates, and mortals are proverbially warned against aspiring to such beatitude: μηδὲ πηρήτω γαμῆν τὰν Ἀφροδίταν (Alcm. 1.17 PMG). Thus, even the hyperbole designed to convey the lover's rapture in the presence of the beloved carries a tinge of *hybris* and looks toward impending catastrophe.⁶⁵

One more disquieting shadow is cast by a verbal repetition, the appearance of *gremium* for the fourth and penultimate time in the elegiac sequence. Catullus had earlier employed *gremium* in a pointedly nonerotic sense—underscored in each case by the accompanying modifier *castum*—for the maiden's "chaste bosom" from which the apple tumbled (65.20) and the "chaste bosom" of Arsinoe-Aphrodite, which served as the Lock's resting-place before catasterism (66.56). At 67.30, however, the heretofore innocent sense of the noun is rudely expelled by the interlocutor's coarse phrase "who himself would piss in his own son's lap," *ipse sui gnati minxerit in gremium*. Consequently, its use as a romantic euphemism in 68.132 foregrounds those same sexual implications and prepares the reader for the disclosure in 145–46 concerning *munuscula* . . . *ex ipso dempta viri gremio*. At that point, no amount of goodwill toward the speaker will inhibit recognition that the delicate, sentimental term *munuscula* attempts to whitewash illegitimate sex, which has already been tainted by the ugliness attached to it in the preceding poem. In retrospect, then, the door of Allius' house, upon whose sill Lesbia had stepped so radiantly, might well seem that of the house in Verona, if viewed through a darker lens and at a distance of three hundred miles.

The Patriarch's Heir

The last, and most crucial, programmatic task of poem 67 in its present context is the proleptic voicing of those subliminal anxieties about family continuity running through the concluding pair of elegies. Throughout the dialogue, adultery is aligned with infecundity. Want of a legitimate heir, and the ensuing transfer of the house to new owners, would appear to be an indirect consequence of the bride's transgressions. Catullus himself, in the combined role of performer and interlocutor, is implicated, however untruthfully, in those transgressions and the barrenness contingent upon them. By placing 67 immediately before 68a–b, the poet factors the new obligation to marry and beget children imposed by his brother's death into his profound interrogation of artistic values. His image of Lesbia as illusory bride and mistress of a literary *domus* is offset by the recognition that an adulterous union, however productive of verse, will not further the essential purpose of marriage, *liberorum quaerendorum causa*.⁶⁶

Let me turn back now to the *exemplum* of Laodamia. As I noted in the preceding chapter, her story exposes and centralizes that psychological struggle between aesthetic creativity and duty already intimated by the fleeting analogy with Teucer in poem 65.⁶⁷ In Catullus' time several renderings of the myth were current, including one by his immediate predecessor Laevius (fr. 13–19 Courtney).⁶⁸ The most famous, however, and certainly the most tragic, was that of Euripides in his lost drama *Protesilaus*. Lyne (1998: 202) provides an outline of the plot as generally reconstructed:⁶⁹

Protesilaus, the first to land at Troy, was the first to be killed, in fulfilment of an oracle. Overcome with grief, Laodamia besought the gods that she might converse again with him for a brief time. Her entreaty was successful: Hermes brought Protesilaus back from the dead, and, for a short time, they were able to converse again together. Then, when Protesilaus was returned to the dead, Laodamia could not bear the pain. As a substitute she secretly made a wax image of him, and embraced and adored it. This stratagem was discovered and condemned. Laodamia's father ordered the image to be burnt on a pyre, and Laodamia, finding her grief unendurable, committed suicide on the pyre.

In spite of the obvious dramatic power of Euripides' version, Catullus reverts to the stark Homeric tale: Protesilaus perished leaping from his ship, the first Greek to die at Troy, leaving behind in Phylace "a wife with both cheeks torn and a half-finished house," τοῦ δὲ καὶ ἀμφιδρυφῆς ἄλοχος Φυλάκη ἐλέλειπτο / καὶ δόμος ἡμιτελής (*Il.* 2.700–701). Paraphrasing the Greek ἡμιτελής, *domam inceptam frustra* signals an immediate debt to Homer.⁷⁰ Catullus' handling of the myth thus excludes the supernatural elements found in Euripides' play, in particular Protesilaus' return from the underworld (Lyne 1998: 208–9). But this is not to say that he avoids any reference to the tragedy.

According to an account preserved by Eustatheus (ad *Il.* 2.701), Laodamia's father Acastus had tried to force the reluctant widow to remarry. In one fragment of the play, someone rejects the thought of betraying that which is dear "even though lifeless" (καίπερ ἄψυχον φίλον, fr. 655 Nauck²). Some critics have seen in ἄψυχον a reference to the statue, others, more plausibly, to the dead Protesilaus; in either case, the line obviously belongs to a Laodamia refusing to obey her father's orders. Other fragments preserve scraps of an *agôn* over the character of woman and her part in generating offspring. In fr. 657 Nauck² someone advises against condemning women indiscriminately: true, there are bad ones, but *this* woman possesses a noble (*eugenes*) character:

ὅστις δὲ πάσας συντιθεῖς ψέγει λόγῳ
 γυναῖκας ἐξῆς, σκαιὸς ἐστὶ κού σοφός·
 πολλῶν γὰρ οὐσῶν τὴν μὲν εὐρήσεις κακὴν,
 τὴν δ' ὥσπερ αὕτη λῆμ' ἔχουσιν εὐγενές.

The man who lumps all women together and reproaches them in speech indiscriminately (*hexês*) is stupid and unwise. For, given many women, you will find that one is bad, and another has a noble spirit—just like *she* does.

A newly published papyrus (P.Oxy. 3214.10–14)⁷¹ contains four lines responding to that statement, as indicated by the repetition of *skaios* and *eugeneia*:

[δοκεῖ μὲν] οὖν μοι σκα[ι]ὸς εὐ[ι]ήθης τ' ἀνὴρ,
 [ὅστις γυν]αικὸς οὐνεκ' ἄν λά[β]ῃ γάμον,
 []του πανδοκεῖ τόκ[ους] μόνον.
 [κοινὸν γὰρ] εἶναι χρῆν γυναι[κεῖον] λέχος] (653 N2)
 [βροτοῖσι· χο]ῦτως εὐγένειά τ['] ἄν κρατοῖ.]

Well, to *me* he seems a stupid and silly fellow, whoever marries for the sake of having a wife, [since she] only lodges the offspring. A woman's bed ought to be available to all men; thus nobility would prevail.

Here another speaker, generally agreed to be Acastus, sneers that a man is a fool to marry with a view to having a particular wife, for she contributes nothing of her own to the heredity of the children she bears; nobility would hold sway only if women were possessed in common. The most probable cause for such an outrageous remark would be Acastus' frustration with his daughter's stubbornness: her determined fidelity to a dead man, at the price of family survival, will have triggered his rage and, with it, the catastrophe (Oranje 171–72).

Now, in a remarkable simile at 68.119–24, Laodamia's fierce passion for Protesilaus is said to surpass the intensity of an old man's joy in his grandson:

nam nec tam carum confecto aetate parenti
 una caput seri nata nepotis alit. . . .

For a lone daughter does not nurture the life of a late-born grandchild so dear to her father consumed by age. . . .

Here in this opening couplet the tragic clash of wills between Acastus and his daughter is revisited allusively and given a more propitious outcome. The sympathetic phrase *confecto aetate* appears to sentimentalize and endorse the wishes of an elderly man longing for a link to posterity. Thus these lines seem to look back thoughtfully—and from a perspective tempered by reflection upon personal loss—at Laodamia’s single-minded devotion to Protesilaus. In affirming eternal constancy to the dead, she had unavoidably injured the living.

Yet as the simile unfolds in epic fashion, like the vignette at 65.19–24, the grandfather’s reaction to the child’s birth is located within a larger familial context:

qui, cum divitiis vix tandem inventus avitis
 nomen testatas intulit in tabulas,
 impia derisi gentilis gaudia tollens
 suscitāt a cano volturium capiti. . . .

. . . when he has had his name entered in the attested will, barely found in time for the ancestral fortune, that child routs a vulture from the gray head, removing the undutiful gratification of a scorned member of the gens. . . .

Commentators (e.g., Fordyce and Thomson 1997 *ad loc.*) find a likely model for the entire passage in Pindar O. 10.86–90, in which an elderly father’s happiness at his newborn heir is similarly motivated: ἐπεὶ πλοῦτος ὁ λαχὼν ποιμένα ἐπακτὸν ἀλλότριον θνάσκοντι στυγερῶτατος, “since wealth allotted a master imported from outside is the most hateful of things to a dying man.” They observe that Catullus has altered the circumstances by making the testator a grandfather and giving the legal situation a Roman coloring: in the absence of a direct male heir to the estate, it would pass to the nearest member of the larger paternal family, the gens. However, the gnomic quality of Pindar’s simile is also debased. The distant kinsman’s mean expectations as he waits for his rich relative’s death, his characterization as a “vulture,” a derogatory term already applied to fortune-hunters in Plautus’ time (*Trin.* 101), and the mockery visited upon him after his hopes are dashed strip away the veneer of sentimentality—not to mention any lingering aura of tragedy—and plunge the reader into the midst of a distasteful family feud. We are back in the world of poem 67, where greed and self-interest prevail.

Again, as in 67, we are confronted with a situation directly impacted by a recent change in the inheritance laws. The *Lex Voconia* of 169 B.C.E.

had prohibited instituting a woman as primary beneficiary if the estate was substantial. Thus the old man's daughter could not be named in his will as sole heiress despite being, prior to the birth of her son, his only direct descendant (Syndikus 1990: 286 and n. 188). In the simile, her child is therefore designated as heir. Before 70 B.C.E., however, the grandson would not have benefited after all if the validity of the will was successfully challenged. Had the child's mother been married *cum manu*, she would have passed legally under the authority of another *paterfamilias* and become ineligible to inherit from members of her natal family in a case of intestacy; if married *sine manu*, she could inherit, but the distant kinsman might be named her *tutor*, assuming supervision of her financial transactions and thus preventing her from passing on the estate to her son. There was therefore no small danger of the old man's demise being financially disadvantageous to his daughter's offspring. As noted above, however, the introduction of the clause *unde cognati* into the praetorian edict had allowed direct descendants of the deceased on either side, paternal or maternal, to take precedence over members of the *gens* as claimants to the estate. Because this clause permitted a daughter's son to succeed even when a will failed, the *gentilis* in Catullus' simile would be excluded and the old man's property was guaranteed to pass to someone who carried his blood, if not his name.⁷² To a Roman audience, such an outcome would be right and proper because it conformed to natural family feeling, *pietas*.

Like the episode of the girl and her apple in 65, then, the extended epic simile introduces into this poem a new set of issues distinct from those previously dominating the narrative. We are asked to look at Laodamia's choice—and, by inference, Catullus' as well—from the viewpoint of society as a whole. By evoking intimations of the dirty little secrets aired in the preceding elegy, the vignette maps the decision she made as a tragic heroine onto the filial relationship within an upper-class Roman household, where claim to a patrimony might well be a pressing question affecting numerous family members. In 67, desire for an heir drove a father to violate his own son's bed and started the bride on her low career of adultery. Early in 68b, Catullus affects to possess both *domus* and *domina* (69), a house of the Muses in Rome and a Muse as its mistress; yet his *domus* turns out to be temporary lodging lent by Allius, and Lesbia herself an adulteress—she becomes, in fact, the embodiment of the *multivola mulier* (128) whose ardor suffers by comparison with that of the faithful dove. Thus, in the changed family circumstances occasioned by his brother's death, Catullus has been forced to confront the facts of his personal erotic relationship in the light of new responsibilities. Whether he is in Rome or Verona, *pietas* will have its due.

The Way of Negation

In terms of the obstacles to comprehension it presents, the series of elegies 65 through 68b is conceivably the most cryptic section of a formidably difficult corpus. While critics have struggled to overcome those obstacles by tracing patterns of similarities, verbal or situational, connecting the poems, they overlook a more compelling issue. If there is an entire chain of inconsistencies here, could it, too, be part of a larger system of meaning?

Wolfgang Iser's theory of how meaning is constituted during the process of reading may cast some light upon the difficulties we have experienced in making complete sense of this elegiac sequence. Iser posits that significance is arrived at through discrete modes of "intersubjective" encounter between reader and text. By basing inferences upon clues given in the text, to begin with, the reader can fill in "blanks" occasioned by changes in narrative viewpoint so as to produce a "'consistent interpretation' or gestalt" (108–18). Accordingly, when scholars find thematic alignments in the Veronese suite—repeated use of marriage imagery, for example, or a situational analogy between Berenice and Laodamia—they are attempting to close such textual gaps. This is a positive act of comprehension that consists of identifying familiar, recurring content within the elegies and giving a synoptic account of it.

However, this is not, according to Iser, the only strategy required for making sense of textual phenomena. Narratives also defamiliarize content and, in so doing, invalidate the reader's preexisting norms. Since the particular aim of the work of art, as opposed to other forms of communication, is the transformation of belief, response to those instances of "deformation" is essential to the text's operations: "the invalidation denotes a deficiency in the selected norms, and so the reader is constrained to develop a specific attitude that will enable him to discover that which the negation has indicated but not formulated" (213). Negations, as well as blanks, are thus a vital component of the text's communicatory structure. The persistent interruptions of tonal and thematic continuity that emerge during a sequential reading of the Veronese suite,⁷³ the blanks that will *not* allow themselves to be filled, may therefore be a vehicle for interrogating precisely those assumptions the poems ostensibly privilege—above all, the value and purpose of art.

Textual meaning itself rests, in fact, upon a substrate of the not-expressed. The formulated text, Iser observes, "has a kind of unformulated double," which he designates as *Verneinung*, "negativity," and identifies as "the basic force in literary communication" (226). Although this

underlying null condition cannot be fully explained in referential language, it has three salient features. Formally, it manifests itself as blanks and partial negations, thereby opening up space for the process of ideation. On the level of content, it “brings about the deformations which are the basic question posed by the text” and allows meaning to emerge “as the reverse side of what the text has depicted” (228). Lastly, it is what allows the work of art to achieve its communicatory purpose by bringing something strange and unsettling into being:⁷⁴

Whatever may be the individual contents which come into the world through a work of art, there will always be something which is never given in the world and which only a work of art provides: it enables us to transcend that which we are otherwise so inextricably entangled in—our own lives in the midst of the real world. Negativity as a basic constituent of communication is therefore an enabling structure. (230)

Due to the interference we continually meet when attempting to track a coherent thematic program through the Veronese suite, the presence of *Verneinung* is constantly felt. Negativity, experienced as a perpetual frustration of closure, becomes its single unifying factor. Thus the suite prepares us for the still more radical juxtapositions and reversals we will confront during our reading of the epigram collection.

CHAPTER THREE



Lesbia and Language

The disparity between the poignantly hopeful close of 68b and the overriding strain of disillusionment in what follows is emphasized, according to T. P. Wiseman, by a concomitant narrowing of focus “from the spacious sweep of mythological narrative to the concentrated economy of epigram” (1985: 164). Despite this constriction, he adds, we still perceive continuity between the last of the long elegies and the subsequent pieces, a continuity underscored, at least at the outset, by thematic juxtaposition. In the first twelve epigrams the speaker’s preoccupation with Lesbia’s infidelity is interrupted by attacks on Rufus, Gellius, “Lesbius,” and Gallus—three of whom are sooner or later exposed as her lovers. Hence Wiseman proceeds to characterize the first part of the epigram collection as “a coherent drama featuring Catullus the lover, his mistress, and his rivals.”

Indeed, evident structural design at the beginning invites critics to seek some corresponding order in the remaining poems as well. Yet most readers who undertake such a project find that coherent patterns dissolve into a more fluid arrangement as we proceed onward, so that the epigrams seem to fall into sections. Bruno Heck, the first scholar to attempt an overall schematic inquiry, divided these poems into two distinct groups: 69–92, concerned with Catullus’ self-torment over Lesbia’s unfaithfulness and his antagonism toward her other lovers, and 93–116, too widely diverse to reflect one unifying theme but showing meaningful positioning at certain points (Heck 66, 74). Wiseman, two decades later, reached similar conclusions through an independent analysis: poems 69–92 form an interlocking cycle on Lesbia and her lovers with recurrent subsidiary motifs of incest and *irrumatio*, while 93–115 are dominated by attacks on Caesar, his henchman “Mentula” (doubtless Mamurra), and perhaps other Caesarian partisans (1969: 25–29).¹ Although Wiseman admits that the second group is much more loosely arranged than the preceding

one and contains a greater number of unrelated poems, he cites the bilateral configuration of the polymetrics, with its slack organization in the second half, as an obvious parallel.² This plan has now been adopted by Holzberg, who plausibly explains the wide range of themes in 93–116 as a reprise, with variations, of motifs sounded earlier in the corpus, signaling that the work as a whole is drawing to a close (177–78).

Quinn's concentration upon the "Lesbia poems" at the expense of what he calls the "poetry of social comment" is symptomatic of New Criticism's low level of interest in topical poetry.³ In his 1985 reexamination of the epigrams, Wiseman too is chiefly interested in charting the progress of the Catullan lover's feelings and quickly passes over those pieces in which Lesbia does not appear (164–75). Dettmer, on the other hand, correctly insists that the Lesbia epigrams should not be studied apart from those ostensibly disparate poems surrounding them (1997: 171–226). Her scheme of verbal and numerical patterning thus produces a fully integrated *libellus*. In order to make it work, however, she is forced to divide the entire group of epigrams into three complete cycles, comprising poems 69–78, 78b–99, and 100–111, respectively, plus a five-poem tag. This scheme, which results in the notional disjunction of related texts (e.g., the separation of the Gellius sequence from earlier invective against Lesbia's paramours) and in strained connections between adjacent texts, seems counterintuitive, even though Dettmer's observations regarding the expressive function of some of the putatively "occasional" pieces are judicious.⁴

In dealing with the epigrams, I prefer to make use of what appears to be both the simpler and the more obvious arrangement, positing just two thematic groupings divided at the break between 92 and 93. This chapter will single out for examination one motif pervading the first half of the epigram collection, the metonymic association Catullus draws between betrayal in love or friendship and the elusiveness of poetic meanings. The succeeding chapter will extend this epistemological analysis to his invectives against the debasement of political language. I hope to show there that the two kinds of unintelligibility, one personal and aesthetic, the other reflecting a collapse of public morality, are in fact closely related. At the same time, I will advance further arguments to support the contention that the second half of the epigram collection is deeply engaged with closure.

Polymetric Play

"For the traditional, conventional Roman, art might serve life directly by teaching it truths, or indirectly by diverting it when it was weary, but art as an end, as a way of life, was unthinkable." Thus W. R. Johnson

endeavors to define what he perceives as the truly innovative feature of Catullus' polymetric collection, the *Passer* or *Sparrow*. Callimachean verse, he goes on, schooled Catullus and his literary associates in a "radically aesthetic world view." Elegance (*lepos*) assumed for them a moral as well as an artistic coloration and could accordingly underpin a code of social conduct wholly at odds with the *mos maiorum*. The *Sparrow* presents those "new concepts of the human person and the human condition" through the stance of its narrator as he pronounces critical judgment upon the manners of his contemporaries. "Beneath this pose, calling it into being, is a sense of identity and of life as passionate as the art that informs it is rigorous" (112–13).

The circumstances that might give rise in the 50s B.C.E. to such a lyric collection espousing such revolutionary principles are variously explained. For Miller, the incentive was largely economic. As the equestrian order became wealthier, certain of its members, like Catullus, found themselves with the means to seek self-validation in a nonconventional fashion, encapsulated in terms (*venustus*, *lepidus*, *doctus*) "stressing style over substance and the pursuit of individual gratification over the good of the state, the family, and one's class" (1994: 135).⁵ The spread of Epicureanism, with its emphasis upon tranquillity and personal enjoyment, doubtless contributed to this mind-set. Clausen (1972 [1964]: 275–79) and Ross (1969: 162) emphasize the catalytic role of Parthenius of Nicaea in helping to foster a trained appreciation of Alexandrian poetics and learning.⁶ Parthenius' instruction can be viewed within the wider context of a pervasive Hellenization of Roman intellectual culture during this period, as documented by Rawson (66–83, esp. 70). Selden (1992: 489–98) factors in a preoccupation with language as a technique for self-fashioning occasioned by the institution, during the previous generation, of schools of grammar and rhetoric founded on Greek models. Clearly all of these ingredients must have played a substantial part in forming the Catullan conception of the *pius poeta*.

It is even possible that a cultural model of aestheticism, equipped with a distinct lexical code and a corresponding ideological bent, was already circulating widely in the political sphere, waiting to be applied to poetic ends. Krostenko demonstrates that such lexemes as *bell(us)*, *venust(us)*, *lepid(us)*, *facet(us)*, and words closely associated with them underwent a semantic shift in the late second century B.C.E. as members of the social élite began to cultivate individualistic behavior and Hellenized tastes and were then forced to defend such practices against old-fashioned moralizing. Their "language of social performance," as he dubs it, sought to amass cultural capital by defining verbal flair as a valuable commodity in public as well as private life (78–84). Catullus appropriates that stylish vocabu-

lary to characterize his poetry as an allied form of élite social performance (255–57), but simultaneously mocks the brittleness of an aestheticism put to self-serving political use.

Whatever the origins of its way of thinking (and, as we have seen, they are no doubt numerous), the polymetric *libellus* proclaims a creed of refinement, setting high standards of charm and polish, *venustas* and *lepos*, for the interactions of daily life as well as for literary production. In poem 2, which leads off the introductory sequence, the poet's mistress is depicted as the exemplar of such decorum.⁷ Engaged in play with her sparrow (*ludere*, 2 and 9), she embodies the neoteric conception of verse as a form of eroticized *ludus*, a concept plainly articulated in poem 50, most likely the penultimate work of the original *Passer*-book. Hence she represents the ideal reader of the *libellus*.⁸ Notwithstanding her hostile portrayal in such poems of disillusionment as 11 and 37, she retains that status throughout, assuming the same posture not only in the opening cycle but in the following pieces 13, 36, 43, and, of course, 51. To grasp the broader dimensions of Lesbia's negative profile in the elegiac epigrams, we must keep in mind this positive characterization of her in the polymetrics.

His Mistress' Voice

Catullus' beloved makes her debut in the shorter elegiac texts as a source of ambiguity,⁹ for poem 70 begins with an indirect quotation of her reported words:

Nulli se dicit mulier mea nubere malle
 quam mihi, non si se Iuppiter ipse petat.
 dicit; sed mulier cupido quod dicit amanti,
 in vento et rapida scribere oportet aqua.

My woman says she prefers to marry no one—but me, not if Jove himself should ask her. Says she; but what a woman says to an eager lover should be written on wind and running water.

The emphatic repetition *dicit* . . . *dicit* acknowledges a direct indebtedness to Callimachus' epigram 11 G–P (*Anth. Pal.* 5.6) and its corresponding anaphora *ômose* . . . *ômosen*. In that poem, a youth pledges lasting fidelity to a girl only to abandon her for a boy:

ὦμοσε Καλλίγνωτος Ἰωνίδι μήποτ' ἐκείνης
 ἔξειν μήτε φίλον κρέσσονα μήτε φίλην.

ῥωσοσεν· ἀλλὰ λέγουσιν ἀληθέα τοὺς ἐν ἔρωτι
 ὄρκους μὴ δύνειν οὐατ' ἐς ἀθανάτων.
 νῦν δ' ὁ μὲν ἄρσενικῶ θέρεται πυρί· τῆς δὲ ταλαίνης
 νύμφης ὡς Μεγαρέων οὐ λόγος οὐδ' ἀριθμός.

Callignotus swore to Ionis he would never cherish anyone more than her, neither boy nor girl. He swore, but they say truly that oaths in love do not enter the ears of the gods. Now he's warmed by desire for a boy. Of the poor maid, as of the Megarians, neither account nor accounting.

The reversal of sex roles in the Catullan imitation, which casts its speaker as the victim of female perfidy, recalls the complicated gender slippages of the Veronese cycle. No less striking is the shift in both tense and personal engagement from a model that recounts past events as told with detached irony by a third party¹⁰ to the continuous present, where Catullus keeps trying to pin down Lesbia's evasive pronouncements while self-consciously admitting his own readiness to be duped.

Suspicion of women's verbal guile has already emerged in the longer elegies. The concealed apple of 65 and the *falsis . . . lacrimulis* (66.16) shed by a bride feigning modesty may be pardonable fibs, but the Brixian adulteress' bogus virginity and the Door's scandalous allegations belong to the category of fraud. One more allusion to Greek tragedy in poem 68b caps this array of deceptions. Juxtaposed similes of a refreshing stream and of sailors' relief after a tempest (57–66), together with the trope of the only son (119–24), recall Clytemnestra's speech welcoming Agamemnon home at Ag. 855–913. Aeschylus' queen applies the same three images to her husband in reverse order (898–901), calling him

. . . . μονογενὲς τέκνον πατρί,
 καὶ γῆν φανεῖσαν ναυτίλοις παρ' ἐλπίδα,
 κάλλιστον ἡμᾶρ εἰσιδεῖν ἐκ χειμάτος,
 ὁδοιπόρῳ διψῶντι πηγαῖον ῥέος·

. . . single son to a father, and land visible to sailors beyond expectation,
 day most beautiful to behold after a storm, spring water for a thirsty traveler. . . .

The dramatic scenario, too, is virtually the same: one spouse in an actual or simulated marriage anticipates his or her partner's entering their residence (Shipton 56–57). Now, in her attempt to forestall Agamemnon's justifiable misgivings, Clytemnestra employs bizarre and *ineffective* language, visualizing her husband perforated like a net or dying in multiple

bodies, and claiming that she herself has been cut down from a noose again and again (Ag. 866–76). Such embarrassing hyperbole discredits the similes that follow. Repetition within the same situational context transfers the implication of unpersuasive speech to 68b, where it interfaces with the questionable encomium of Allius. The key semiotic advantage gained by thus mapping the tragedy of the house of Atreus onto Catullus' *domus* is to identify Clytemnestra and Lesbia, foregrounding not their adultery—though that is of course another point in common between the women—but their patent mendacity.

By bringing to center stage that mistrust of women's words already implied in the course of the Veronese cycle, poem 70 mediates the transition between the longer elegies and the epigrams. Miller (1988: 130–31) enumerates the numerous instances of "bad faith" in Lesbia's quoted remarks. First, the emphatic opening word *nulli* has the force of a categorical negation, making *quam mihi* into a belated afterthought. Then Lesbia's rejection of Jupiter as a hypothetical marriage partner is "doubly duplicitous," insofar as neither she nor the king of the gods was actually free to wed. Furthermore, it looks back ironically to 68.135–40, in which Catullus, painfully aware of his mistress' *rara furta*, identifies himself with a Juno forced to endure the *plurima furta* of Jove. In the closing pentameter, finally, Lesbia's verbal assurances are assimilated to the written words deprecated by Socrates: the wise man will not "soberly inscribe his words in black water," that is, ink (σπουδῇ αὐτὰ ἐν ὕδατι γράψει μέλανι, *Phaed.* 276c). This reminiscence collapses the famed Platonic distinction between speech, which can be interrogated, and writing, which cannot.¹¹

Allusion to the *Phaedrus* seems to associate Lesbia herself with the practice of writing and particularly with its tendency to produce error in the minds of the unwary.¹² Did Catullus' intertextual strategy create a frame of reference that could induce the original audience for the *libellus* to construe poem 70 as a metapoetic pronouncement?¹³ From the evidence of a near-contemporary parody, it did. Suetonius (*Rhet.* 18.2) preserves an anonymous epigram celebrating L. Crassicius Pansa's commentary on Cinna's *Zmyrna*:

Uni Crassicio se credere Smyrna probavit;
desinite, indocti, coniugio hanc petere.
soli Crassicio se dixit nubere velle,
intima cui soli nota sua exstiterint.

Zmyrna has agreed to entrust herself to one man, Crassicius: cease, you ill-educated, to seek this lady in marriage. She said that she wishes to wed only Crassicius, for her private parts were grasped by him alone.¹⁴

Even for a neoteric composition, Cinna's epyllion was notoriously obscure. Here the *Zmyrna* pledges herself to Crassicius as his private intellectual property because, as she is made to confess in the last line, he is the only one to have penetrated her secrets.¹⁵ Metonymic equation of women's words and written text is extended to incorporate the corollary idea of privileged access to textual meanings. *Zmyrna*'s commitment gains all the more credibility through marked contrast with Lesbia's elusiveness: Crassicius the scholar controls exegesis, while Catullus the poet should not expect to control reception of his own artistic creation.¹⁶

In the first half of the epigram collection, three follow-up pieces continue the investigation of whether the author can truly "know" his work. Poem 72 retrojects Lesbia's declared preference for Catullus into the past and allows increased confusion to seep into her original statement. The opening couplet, *Dicebas quondam solum te nosse Catullum, / Lesbia, nec prae me velle tenere Iovem*, "poses," in Janan's formulation, "a question of reading":

[W]hat precisely did Lesbia say to Catullus—"I know Catullus alone"? "Catullus alone knows me"? "I wish to know Catullus alone"? "I wish Catullus alone to know me"? The construction of the indirect statement makes her reported enunciation ambiguous, but we do not perceive the ambiguity until the second line of the distich. One must carefully reread the sentence in order to arrive at a *decision*—not a certainty—as to what it says. (Janan 89; italics hers)

As the occasion of the spoken word recedes temporally, its meaning becomes less and less certain; so, too, with poetic discourse, which accrues more and more indeterminability the farther it is removed from the context of its production. The only uncontested facts remaining are those of the speaker's drastically altered emotional state and his mistress' insensitivity to it.¹⁷ Having come to understand her thoroughly (*nunc te cognovi*), he simultaneously lusts after her and despises her as tawdry, each emotion felt more intensely than before (*quare etsi impensius uror, / multo mi tamen es vilior et levior*, 5–6). "How is this possible?" (*qui potis est?*, 7) she asks.¹⁸ The vacuity of the question hints at the Platonic censure of writing's inherent deficiencies: texts speak as though they had intelligence (ὥς τι φρονοῦντας αὐτοὺς λέγειν, *Phaed.* 275d) but in reality possess none. Unable to interact with their audience, they consequently remain ignorant of whatever harm they do.

Poems 83 and 92, at first glance merely amusing comments on the subterfuge necessitated by the affair—drawing-room comedy, appropriately wry—have also been explored from a different angle by Janan (83–85),

who analyzes them as parables of reading in which the speaker dictates the correct interpretation of his mistress' words. In the first epigram Catullus gloats over the stupidity of Lesbia's husband, who misconstrues her insulting remarks:

Lesbia mi praesente viro mala plurima dicit;
 haec illi fatuo maxima laetitia est.
 mule, nihil sentis? si nostri oblita taceret,
 sana esset; nunc quod gannit et obloquitur,
 non solum meminit, sed, quae multo acrior est res,
 irata est. hoc est, uritur et coquitur.

In her husband's presence Lesbia abuses me roundly; it brings that fool much joy. Idiot, don't you understand anything? If, having forgotten me, she were silent, she'd be indifferent; now, because she mutters and reviles me, she not only remembers but—more to the point—she's angry. That's it: she's aflame and seethes.

To confirm his awareness of Lesbia's intentions, he then argues in 92 from subjective experience:

Lesbia mi dicit semper male nec tacet umquam
 de me: Lesbia me dispeream nisi amat.
 quo signo? quia sunt totidem mea: deprecor illam
 assidue, verum dispeream nisi amo.

Lesbia always speaks badly of me and is never silent about me; damned if she doesn't love me. How do I know? Because my case is the same: I trash her all the time, but damned if I don't love her.

The initial repetition of *Lesbia mi*, followed by the reminiscent expressions *dicit . . . male* (= *mala . . . dicit*, 83.1), and *tacet* (= *taceret*, 83.3), indicate that this epigram should be regarded as complementary to its predecessor, taking the problem one step further. Insofar as Catullus is able to deduce Lesbia's concealed motives from his own behavior, he possesses key information unavailable to his dull-witted rival, her husband, and can therefore present his "reading" of Lesbia as intrinsically more correct. Janan draws an illuminating comparison with the discriminating stance of Callimachean poetics: "The lovers' speech, like Callimachus' erudite poetry, is understandable only to an élite interpretive community—to themselves and to the *cognoscenti* who read Catullus' poetry and are thus let in on the secret" (85).

Janan's analogy is particularly apt because this very poem seems to have inspired dissension among Roman critics quarreling over the definition of a crucial verb. In his *Noctes Atticae* (7.16), Aulus Gellius recounts an exchange with a nameless individual (sarcastically designated a *vir bonus*) who pronounced Catullus' verses "extremely insipid" (*frigidissimos*) because he had misunderstood the prefix *de-* in *deprecor*:

'Deprecor' hoc in loco vir bonus ita esse dictum putabat, ut plerumque a vulgo dicitur, quod significat 'valde precor' et 'oro' et 'supplico', in quo 'de' praepositio ad augendum et cumulandum valet. Quod si ita esset, frigidi sane versus forent. Nunc enim contra omnino est: nam 'de' praepositio, quoniam est anceps, in uno eodemque verbo duplicem vim capit. Sic enim 'deprecor' a Catullo dictum est, quasi 'detestor' vel 'exsecror' vel 'depello' vel 'abominor'. . . .

The fine fellow thought *deprecor* was used in this passage as it's often used in ordinary speech, with the sense of "plead strongly" and "beseech" and "entreat," where the preposition *de-* has an intensifying and climactic force. If that were the case, the lines would be flat indeed. As it is, it's just the opposite, for the preposition *de-*, since it has a twofold import, acquires a double meaning in one and the same word. Thus *deprecor* is used by Catullus as though it were "loathe" or "curse" or "banish" or "avert by prayer". . . .

After citing passages from Cicero and Ennius illustrating each meaning of the verb, Gellius gives his own rendering of the distich: *sic igitur Catullus eadem se facere dicit, quae Lesbiam, quod et malediceret ei palam respueretque et recusaret detestareturque assidue et tamen eam penitus deperiret* ("this is why Catullus says he behaves in the same way Lesbia does, because he kept insulting her in public and spurning her and rejecting her and constantly expressing dislike for her, and nevertheless desired her passionately"). By employing *deprecor* in this comparatively rare sense, Catullus—as Gellius appreciates—ingeniously (*doctiuscule*) plays a game with audiences: the obtuse, such as his would-be critic friend, assume the word has its ordinary significance and receive the wrong message about the speaker's conduct. Hence not all the *cognoscenti* who read Catullus' poetry are themselves capable of getting the point, any more than Lesbia's fatuous husband can fathom his wife's intent. For this reason, Gellius himself deems these verses *omnium quidem iudicio venustissimos*, "quite elegant indeed, in the judgment of all" (that is, all who matter). The anecdote is important because it establishes that competent Latin-speaking readers not only looked for puns and ambiguities in Catullus' verse but also prided themselves on

belonging to a select interpretive community equipped to resolve such semiological uncertainties.

If, in conclusion, we approach these four epigrams as metapoetic, that is, as texts primarily *about texts*, we see that their placement calls attention to the role played in the elegiac collection by considerations of poetic truth. The paired poems in which Lesbia's speech is at issue frame, at beginning and end, the series of epigrams grappling with erotic disillusionment. Obscurity increases from the first pair to the second: what Lesbia means, what Catullus thinks she means, and, finally, what Catullus himself means are progressively called into question. If Lesbia the "written woman" is construed as the embodiment of a sophisticated aesthetic decorum, her own lack of intelligibility and insight must bespeak a crux in neoteric poetics. From a Platonic point of view, it might even be said to encapsulate "the duplicity and discrepancy, lying and betrayal of poetic representation itself" (Felperin 194–95). Furthermore, since her unreadability is associated—both in the literary scenario and, materially, in the physical *libellus*—with the estrangement of two of Catullus' former friends and the base designs of her agnatic kin, it also reflects upon a slip-slide of meanings in a disintegrating social order.

Lesbia and Her Lovers, I: Rufus

In those epigrams where Catullus portrays himself as a "wronged lover," to use Fitzgerald's neat label, he also resorts to ethical terminology, applying such value-charged terms as *fides* ("credibility"), *foedus* ("compact"), *officium* ("service, obligation"), *pietas* ("consciousness of duty"), and *amicitia* ("friendship") to his dealings with his mistress. At the end of poem 109—itsself the last epigram to mention Lesbia—he attempts frankly to justify the moral dimension of his rhetoric by designating their *amor* as "this eternal compact of holy friendship," *aeternum hoc sanctae foedus amicitiae*. The exact source of that ethical vocabulary is contested: Ross' attempt (1969: 80–95; 1975: 9–15) to locate it squarely within the domain of party politics is challenged by Lyne (1980: 23–26), who attributes it to a larger code of "aristocratic obligation" invoked by the senatorial class in all its social dealings, including the conduct of private affective relationships.¹⁹ At this point, I do not intend to reopen that particular controversy. Let me only stipulate here what I have argued elsewhere, that, while Ross' restriction of this language to the political sphere is perhaps much too narrow, Lyne's determined effort to *exclude* political resonances from Catullus' love poetry is equally mistaken.²⁰ The physical juxtaposition of certain Lesbia epigrams with others containing express or

implicit topical commentary, together with pointed references to current events in poem 79, where Catullus actually “unmasks” Lesbia, ensures that exposing betrayals of the norm of elite moral behavior, even in an erotic context, will have inescapable political implications.

At the outset of the epigram collection, the closely related pieces on the evasive quality of Lesbia’s speech (70) and its coarsening effect upon the lover’s feelings (72) are preceded in each case by an invective squib. In the first of these, a man named Rufus is warned of his hygienic shortcomings (69.5–8):

laedit te quaedam mala fabula, qua tibi fertur
 valle sub alarum trux habitare caper.
 hunc metuunt omnes, neque mirum: nam mala valde est
 bestia, nec quicum bella puella cubet. . . .

. . . a certain nasty rumor injures you, whereby in the hollow of your armpits a cruel wether (*caper*) is said to dwell. All fear him, and no wonder, for the beast is terribly bad and not one with whom a lovely girl would sleep. . . .

Though it divulges no names, poem 71 seems to be associated with that earlier lampoon through its comparable use of a noun meaning “goat” as a metaphor for underarm odor:

Si cui iure bono sacer alarum obstitit hircus
 aut si quem merito tarda podagra secat,
 aemulus iste tuus, qui vestrum exercet amorem,
 mirifice est ꝑa te nactus utrumque malum.
 nam quotiens futuit, totiens ulciscitur ambos:
 illam affligit odore, ipse perit podagra.

If the accursed ram (*hircus*) of the armpits has rightly stood in anyone’s way, or if hindering gout has deservedly stabbed anyone, that rival of yours, who interferes with your mistress, has marvelously [. . .] caught both plagues, since, as often as he fucks, he punishes each culprit: he distresses her with stench, and he himself dies of gout.

The initial interpretive question is the identity of the person being addressed. The common assumption that it is Rufus rests upon acceptance of the ms. reading *a te nactus* in line 4. Literally, this would mean he has infected a rival (*aemulus*) with both gout and the body odor ascribed to him in the previous poem. Yet Rufus’ reappearance in the guise of an unnamed

addressee seems odd, and the putative introduction of a new player, the *aemulus*, is decidedly clumsy. What weighs most against the transmitted reading is the fact that neither malady is contagious.²¹ Alternatively, Thomson (1997) prints the Humanist conjecture *apte*, approved by Nisbet (109) and defended by Kaster (1977) as consistent with the epigram's ironic insistence upon poetic justice. In the company of *nactus*, Kaster points out, *mirifice . . . apte* lays stress upon the serendipitous: "that rival of yours . . . has, with wonderful propriety, hit upon both misfortunes . . ." (311). On this hypothesis, there is no question of a hardship being transmitted to a third party. Instead, Catullus speaks to himself, as he will likewise do in the initial distich of 73 and the first sixteen lines of 76, while Rufus, for his part, is now provided with a second affliction.

Poem 71 comically anticipates ethical preoccupations voiced in earnest in the epigrams immediately following, which fix upon injuries received at the hands of trusted intimates. It burlesques the rhetorical development of poem 76, for it begins *si cui . . . obstitit hircus* ("if a ram has hindered anyone . . ."), a construction subsequently replicated at the opening of the longer soliloquy: *si qua recordanti . . . voluptas / est homini* ("if there is any pleasure for a person remembering . . ."). In the apodosis of that conditional, the speaker can only comfort himself with the bleak promise that right conduct will eventually (*in longa aetate*, 76.5) afford its own gratifications. The corresponding clause of this epigram, on the other hand, offers an orderly, psychologically satisfying resolution: the speaker's grievance is already well and fitly (*iure bono . . . merito . . . apte*) requited. Chance provides the means by which he will have his vengeance, and its agent is the very party responsible for the injury: in the act of wrongdoing, the rival punishes both the unfaithful mistress and himself. Although such a parody might have proleptically trivialized the issues of betrayal explored later, that is actually not what happens: the farcical insults Rufus suffers, capped by the finesse of the penalty he pays, remove the hope of obtaining justice from the realities of life, confining it to the realm of ribald fantasy, and make the final prayer for deliverance in 76 all the more poignant.

In both of its integrated pairs, then, the cluster of poems 69 through 72 displays narrative and emotive progression from one component to the other. Between 70 and 72, as we have seen, the speaker's reaction to the problem of Lesbia's sincerity becomes more complex, modulating from the pseudo-sophisticated cynicism of 70 to the pained struggle of *odi* versus *amo* that thematically dominates the series of erotic epigrams. Similarly, 69 and 71 adopt different stances toward their invective target. The initial poem affects a detached, admonitory tone (Rufus is being told something for his own good), while its pendant exhibits a malicious

Schadenfreude—understandably, for there we discover that Catullus has a personal stake in the matter. It comes as no surprise that the evils suffered by his rival are likewise augmented. Besides visiting a second affliction, gout, upon Rufus, the poet may be making the associations of the goat-metaphor progressively more disgusting: *caper* (69.6) is technically a castrated animal, whereas *hircus* (71.1) is an entire male, which would smell even ranker.²²

Read as a unit, consequently, this group of four poems forms a composite introduction to the epigrammatic sequence 73–77, in which the two previously independent motifs of emotional ambivalence and disillusionment with false friends are joined and elaborated. The final distich of 72 sets out the controlling erotic paradox together with its essential vocabulary: *amantem iniuria talis / cogit amare magis, sed bene velle minus* (“such injury compels the lover to love the more, but to bear less goodwill,” 7–8). In the first line of 73, the collocation *bene velle*, though now construed differently, nevertheless forges a link between deception on Lesbia’s part and on that of an unnamed male acquaintance.²³ This epigram defines the essence of what Catullus regards as *iniuria*, “injury”: good deeds are rendered vain insofar as the beneficiary disregards, or even scorns, the reciprocal obligations incurred (73.1–6):

Desine de quoquam quicquam bene velle mereri
aut aliquem fieri posse putare pium.
omnia sunt ingrata, nihil fecisse benigne <est>;
immo etiam taedet, <taedet> obestque magis;
ut mihi, quem nemo gravius nec acerbius urget
quam modo qui me unum atque unicum amicum habuit.

Stop wanting (*velle*) to deserve well (*bene mereri*) of anyone in any way, or thinking a single person can show himself dependable (*pium*). All labor is wasted, that you acted with kindness goes for nothing; in fact, it even disgusts you, disgusts and obstructs you instead: as in my case, whom no one harasses more severely or bitterly than he who just lately called me his one and only friend.

Expectation of return is fundamental to Roman social interaction.²⁴ However rich its emotive quality, any relationship of *amicitia* also presupposes a mutual exchange of favors (*officia* or *beneficia*) in proportion to each partner’s station and means.²⁵ Reciprocity is therefore central to the ethical code invoked in the epigrams, and Catullus’ application of that code to his relationship with Lesbia places her under “a moral obligation to return his *amor*, *fides* and *benefacta*” (Gibson 62). Her defection indi-

cates, conversely, that the ideology of *amicitia* has lost its moral authority; hence the speaker cannot help but experience similar betrayals by other associates.

In poem 75, Catullus probes the reason for his incapacity to behave reasonably in the face of Lesbia's *iniuria*:

Huc est mens deducta tua, mea Lesbia, culpa
 atque ita se officio perdidit ipsa suo,
 ut iam nec bene velle queat tibi, si optima fias,
 nec desistere amare, omnia si facias.

To this point, my Lesbia, has my mind been brought through your fault
 and has itself so ruined itself by its own *officium*, that it could not now
 bear you goodwill, were you to turn all virtuous, nor cease to love you,
 whatever you might do.

Kroll *ad loc.* distinguishes between the concrete sense of *officium*, "Dienst," encountered at 68.12 and 110.7, and the broader concept "Pflichterfüllung" or "Treue," which, for him, is found only here in Catullus. On this conventionally received reading, the speaker asserts that in combination with Lesbia's *culpa* his own "devotion" (as both Fordyce and Thomson 1997 translate it) to the *foedus amicitiae* (109.6) has skewed the burden of obligation, rendering it hopelessly inequitable. However, the strategically placed noun *officium* can express, in addition to the ethically charged words "devotion" or "dedication," the neutral meaning "function of a bodily organ."²⁶ If the latter sense is admitted too, Catullus would be saying that his mind (*mens*), by compulsively dwelling upon Lesbia's wrongdoing, has warped its own responses (*se . . . perdidit ipsa*) to a degree that precludes his reacting to her behavior, whatever form it should take, in an appropriate manner. Mapping such mental disturbance upon the emotional impasse first sketched out in 72 leads us directly into the inescapable dilemma posed in 76, where the inadequacy of reason is dramatically enacted.

At the beginning of that thematically pivotal poem, an intellectually detached incarnation of the Catullan subject—let us call him the "logical observer"—expostulates with the obsessed and psychologically paralyzed side of himself.²⁷ He introduces his argument by advancing an ethical hypothesis: if someone can take pleasure in contemplating his previous just actions, then Catullus' awareness of his honorable conduct toward his beloved, albeit unacknowledged by her, will eventually offer its own rewards (76.1–8):

Si qua recordanti benefacta priora voluptas
 est homini, cum se cogitat esse pium,
 nec sanctam violasse fidem, nec foedere in ullo
 divum ad fallendos numine abusum homines,
 multa parata manent in longa aetate, Catulle,
 ex hoc ingrato gaudia amore tibi.
 nam quaecumque homines bene cuiquam aut dicere possunt
 aut facere, haec a te dictaque factaque sunt.

If there is any pleasure for a man in remembering past good deeds, when he considers himself to be principled (*pium*), having neither violated a sacred trust nor in any compact exploited veneration of the gods in order to deceive men, many joys remain stored up for you in a long lifetime, Catullus, from this unrequited love. For whatever things people are able to say well or do well for anyone else, these were said and done by you.

The controlling moral term is now *pietas*, denoting a recognition of responsibility that extends beyond the secular sphere of *officium* to involve the subject's relations with the divine order (Hellegouarc'h 276). That virtue recollected affords gratification to the man who is *pious* is a commonplace well attested in Cicero's philosophical works.²⁸ Janan (98–99) observes the corollary parallelism between the benefits of remembered *pietas* in poem 76 and the lover's apprehension of divinity in the *Phaedrus*, likewise attained, as Socrates tells us, through memory (Pl. *Phdr.* 253a). Within the poetic scenario, however, the observer's claim has, as Adler (36) remarks, "only a conditional validity, the condition being the truth of its major premise." That premise turns out to be demonstrably false: "past *pietas* evidently does *not* bring present pleasure, for Catullus was *pious* in the past and has no pleasure now." Indeed, the observer's argumentative strategy fails entirely because it rests upon the cognitive view of morality underlying Stoic and Epicurean ethics (Booth 160–67). Both systems posit that control of unruly passions is a matter of rational choice. Such self-mastery is impossible for the desiring subject of 76, whose mind, as we know from 75, is no longer capable of performing the operations asked of it.²⁹ Thus the observer's attempt to talk his irrational counterpart out of this dilemma, based as it is upon pure logic, can only result in a stalemate, the latter procrastinating while the former continues to press (13–14): *difficile est longum subito deponere amorem; / difficile est, verum hoc qua lubet efficias* ("It's hard to put aside a long love suddenly."—"It is hard, but do it, in whatever way you can."). Both aspects of the *ego* finally join in a desperate appeal for salvation from without: *o di, reddite mi hoc pro pietate mea* ("render me this, gods, in return

for my *pietas*,” 26).³⁰ The subject position of the detached logical observer is abandoned—or, rather, subsumed beneath another, one which acknowledges its powerlessness and weakness of will while stubbornly clinging to a belief in the moral efficacy of *pietas*.

Yet in poem 76 *pietas* is a term whose effectiveness, at least in the sphere of private erotic relations, is all but negated. Other components of the “language of aristocratic obligation” prominent in the opening lines of the poem share the same fate. Stressing the contradiction inherent in Catullus’ assertion of fidelity (*fides*) to a personal compact or *foedus* originating through violation of a communal *foedus*—that of a socially sanctioned marriage—Miller (1994: 131–32) remarks that “by means of a deferred return of the repressed . . . the public meaning of *foedus* reemerges and betrays Catullus’ claim to ethical purity.” That perceived tension between the private, affective sense of Catullus’ poetic language and its wider social implications has even greater interpretive consequences:

More importantly, it is only through the recognition of the determining presence of these highly charged ideological words’ primary social significance—hidden in the text’s “political unconscious”—that the reader becomes aware of how the traditional terms of Roman ideology, in the course of the social upheavals played out in the final years of the republic, were made vulnerable to certain determined appropriations; and how the semiotic slippages engendered by the same appropriations both undermined and created the space necessary for the birth of lyric consciousness. (132)

However, where Miller and others see in Catullus’ hijacking of this ethical vocabulary an act of resistance to conservative Roman values and a way of articulating “a utopian vision of love and poetry as a private world removed from the dangers of political life and constant civil war,”³¹ I submit that his use of such language in an ostensibly unsuitable context is itself, among other things, a political gesture, a strategy for demonstrating how the established meanings of these words have been subverted in the course of power struggles among ambitious oligarchs and their supporters.

Within the epigram sequence, the last term to undergo semantic dislocation is *amicitia*.³² Contemporary sources indicate that this word had already acquired the pejorative overtones of Horace’s *graves principum amicitias* (“the disastrous friendships of leading men,” *Carm.* 2.1.3–4). After the fall of Carthage, Sallust reports, selfish interests began to drive the formation of personal ties among prominent figures. Ambition impelled them “to value friendships and enmities not for their own sake

but with a view to profit," *amicitias inimicitiasque non ex re sed ex commodo aestumare* (Cat. 10.5), and, in the wake of this phenomenon, rampant greed followed.³³ Sallust's moralizing, as Wallace-Hadrill notes, points to a historical change taking place at the time—the "monetization" of relations between patrons and clients, as indicated by the financial rewards of advocacy and the increased use of bribery in elections (70–71). Although they were grounded upon the expectation of benefits given and received (Dionysius of Halicarnassus 2.10.1–3), bonds of patronage might nevertheless allow for mutual respect and intimacy. Ennius' cameo portrait of Servilius, the confidant of Aemilius Paullus, encapsulates the model qualities—including discretion, loyalty, learning, and camaraderie—to be desired in the friend of a man superior in rank and fortune (8.268–85 Skutsch).³⁴ Actualities of intercourse naturally would have observed the etiquette proper to members' respective social standings; yet application of the noun *amicitia* to a relationship imposed upon it an idealized vision of conduct prompted by reciprocal goodwill. Pecuniary exploitation of status asymmetry therefore destabilized the patronage system, causing it to experience a loss of confidence as an institution.³⁵

Cicero consequently reacts in a harshly negative way to the notion of a friendship, whether of unequals or relative equals, that excludes sentiment and foregrounds gain. At the end of the first book of *De natura deorum*, Cotta the Academic is condemning the Epicureans for denying divine benevolence and promoting an egocentric utilitarianism in human relations. Cicero's speaker is made to remind his colleagues that *amicitia* is derived from the word *amor* and to dismiss alliances formed with a view to mutual profit as "not friendship but a trade-off of personal advantages" (*non erit ista amicitia sed mercatura quaedam utilitatum suarum*, 1.122). That this was Cicero's private opinion is evident from the *De amicitia*, composed at roughly the same time, in which he again insists upon the primacy of affection as the defining quality of friendship. It is true that he there recognizes "complete agreement in intentions, interests, and opinions" (*voluntatum studiorum sententiarum summa consensio*, 15) as one of its key features, but that harmony of attitudes, as he insists in his famous definition, will be accompanied by "goodwill and warmth," *benevolentia et caritate* (20). In that treatise, too, he once more strives to restore the core meaning of *amicitia* by appealing to its cognates *amor* and *amare* (*Amic.* 26, 100). By insisting so frankly upon the affective component of friendship, Cicero appears to acknowledge that the positive overtones of the word had suffered impairment during his lifetime.³⁶

Elsewhere Catullus ironically employs *amicus* in the sense of "patron," giving it unmistakable overtones of pure self-interest. "Seek noble 'friends'" (*pete nobiles amicos*), he sarcastically advises the ill-used

Veranius and Fabullus at 28.13. He may also put a disturbing spin upon “your singular friendship for me” (*tua nobis . . . unica amicitia*) at 100.5–6 (below, p. 127). As a topos of Catullan and Sallustian diatribe, the detrimental effect upon the civic order of self-serving agreements illustrates the tendency of Roman moralizing discourses to attribute large political and economic problems to wrongdoing on the part of individuals (C. Edwards 1993: 4). It follows that writers could eventually apply the term *amicitia* quite cynically to personal alliances regarded as ruinous to society, as Horace does in the *Odes*. What happened to this one word might be seen as symptomatic of widespread deterioration in the entire civic and ethical vocabulary: Sallust’s Cato (*Cat.* 52.11) charges that “we have lost the true words for things,” *iam pridem equidem nos vera vocabula rerum amisimus*, before proceeding to demolish the specious rhetoric of his opponent Caesar.³⁷

In poem 77, the threat to social institutions embedded in this semantic shift is finally disclosed. We return to Rufus, whose treachery to Catullus, given only superficial mention in 71, now comes under impassioned attack:

Rufe mihi frustra ac nequiquam credite amice
 (frustra? immo magno cum pretio atque malo),
 scine subrepsti mi atque intestina perurens
 ei misero eripuisti omnia nostra bona?
 eripuisti, eheu nostrae crudele venenum
 vitae, eheu nostrae pestis amicitiae.

Rufus, trusted as a friend by me vainly and to no purpose (“vainly”? at great cost and injury, in fact) have you thus stolen into me and, searing my vital organs, snatched away all good things from unhappy me? You have snatched them away, ah, cruel poison of my life, ah, blight of our friendship.

As in 76, the speaker’s candid faith in another is not repaid and, in fact, works to his detriment. A dense web of verbal associations establishes that the second poem, 77, is pendant to its immediate predecessor and slightly later in dramatic time. Rufus is held accountable for the distress the speaker had suffered earlier, for in 76 Catullus had described his state of mind as a life-threatening illness (17–23, 25):

o di, si vestrum est misereri, aut si quibus umquam
 extremam iam ipsa in morte tulistis opem,
 me miserum aspice et, si vitam puriter egi,

eripite hanc pestem perniciemque mihi,
 quae mihi subrepens imos ut torpor in artus
 expulit ex omni pectore laetities. . . .
 ipse valere opto et taetrum hunc deponere morbum.

Oh gods, if you are capable of pity, or if ever you have brought final assistance to those already on the brink of death, look down upon me in my misery and, if I have lived my life decently, snatch away from me this destructive blight, which, stealing into the depths of my limbs like a paralysis, has driven happiness completely from my heart. . . . I myself wish to be well and to put aside this loathsome disease.

Now Rufus himself has become the affliction that steals within (*subrepens*, 76.21 = *subrepsti*, 77.3) its victim, taking away not his happiness but, more generically, all the good things he possessed. For this reason, the addressee can be designated *nostrae pestis amicitiae*, an “instrument of ruin” to friendship, whether injuring his own relations with Catullus or (as Quinn 1973a *ad loc.* suggests) also those of Catullus with Lesbia. I have argued elsewhere (Skinner 1987) that the disease imagery in both 76 and 77 has political and cultural, as well as strictly personal, ramifications. Epithets like *morbus* and, especially, *pestis* are attached both to behavior that threatens the social order and to individuals perpetrating it.³⁸ If we permit the political nuances of these metaphors to operate in the background here, we may infer that what has been destroyed in the speaker’s mind is not just one private compact but an entire system of social interchange based upon mutual obligation. Together, Lesbia and her lover Rufus mark the depths to which the aristocratic language of commitment has sunk.

Poem 78b is a four-line fragment threatening a suspected sexual deviant—a fellator or cunnilinctor—with eternal notoriety:

.....
 sed nunc id doleo, quod purae pura puellae
 savia comminxit spurca saliva tua.
 verum id non impune feres: nam te omnia saecula
 noscent et, qui sis, fama loquetur anus.

As it is, I grieve at this, that your filthy saliva has pissed upon the pure kisses of a pure girl. But you will not get away with it: for all generations will know you and rumor when old will tell what kind of man you are.

In the conceptual scheme of Roman sexuality,³⁹ contact with the genitals “contaminates” the mouth (Richlin 1992 [1983]: 26–27, 69, 99).⁴⁰

Fellatio and cunnilingus are identified as equally degrading activities; the charge of having a “befouled mouth,” *os impurum*, implies engaging in either or both acts.⁴¹ Thus alleged participation in oral-genital sex constitutes a particularly vicious insult.⁴² Images of reeking breath and rotting teeth signify the moral disgust aroused by the practice. Because its pollution is supposedly contagious and can be spread by a social kiss, what a man does in private is a matter of concern to his associates. In themselves, these assumptions are sufficient to explain why the *os impurum* becomes such an overriding preoccupation of the invective epigrams. As we will see, though, in the context of political and linguistic corruption, taint attached to the mouth can take on symbolic dimensions as well.

Though some scholars have proposed moving 78b elsewhere and attaching it to another epigram, the grammatical structure suggests these lines are not displaced but damaged: Thomson (1997) infers from *sed nunc* (“but as it is”) that the missing portion may have contained an unreal condition—possibly a fantasized sanction, physical or otherwise, that would have compelled the addressee to forego involvement with the *puella*. As things are, though, the speaker’s sole recourse is exposure: rumor will see to it that the wrongdoer’s identity (*qui sis*), that is, his secret pathic disposition, is broadcast to all later ages. In this context of perpetual stigma, *fama loquetur anus* echoes *haec carta loquetur anus*, the poet’s request to the Muses at 68.46, where Allius is promised perpetual renown in return for his *officia* (Kroll *ad loc.*). The poet’s capacity to confer immortality can punish as well as reward.

Ironically, perhaps due to mutilation, we have no idea at whom this squib is aimed. Given the evident sense of closure in the last distich, it might seem to look backward toward the series of attacks upon Rufus, so as to round them off firmly. The reminiscence of 68b contributes to that possibility by imposing a ring-composition that could define the parameters of a complete sequence in which Allius’ true friendship and *benefacta* are contrasted with friendship spurned and good deeds wasted. However, the ironies of the Allius-elegy militate against formulating an oversimplified comparison between Allius, on the one hand, and Lesbia and Rufus on the other. Moreover, the subject of the *os impurum* obviously points forward to 79, 80, and variations on this polemic theme in the second half of the epigram collection. As we will see, *savia* here is repeated at 79.4, and the notion of *fama* bearing reports of oral sex is reintroduced in 80.5–6. Forsyth (1985: 380) observes that the implicit promise to attack *by name* in the concluding couplet is fulfilled when the pseudonyms Lesbius and Lesbia are elucidated in 79. It may be wiser to treat poem 78b, then, as a transitional poem bridging the gap between Rufus, the first of Lesbia’s lovers, and others to come.

Unmasking Lesbia

Ancient epigrammatists prior to Catullus endow their objects of devotion with only so much reality as will enable them to perform their function of signifier within the text. Callimachus' Lysanias, for example, or Meleager's Heliodora and Zenophila are but names on which to hang a crisp literary conceit; no attempt is made to sketch in background or personality, apart from such generic qualities as charm and fickleness. At first glance, Catullus' Lesbia seems a construct of the same sort. In paying homage to Sappho of Lesbos, her name designates her an avatar of poetry, and her further association with the neoteric virtues of *lepos*, *venustas*, and *urbanitas* transform her into an abstract "consummation of a style" (Ross 1975: 9). When we turn to her most prominent literary function, that of unworthy object of passion in the poems concerned with erotic betrayal, this abstract character appears even more pronounced; Lesbia fades into the background while the poetic *ego* becomes more and more absorbed in its own sense of injury. We see this trend already in 76, where she figures only in the concluding lines, and then as a colorless *illa* (23); in 85, the *odi et amo* distich, she is not mentioned at all, the impact of conflicting emotions upon the speaker's consciousness being a preoccupation sufficient unto itself. These concluding epigrams present us with an insubstantial Lesbia, hardly more than a device employed to trigger the *ego's* exploration of its own subjective conditions.

Yet the poems that reduce Lesbia to a cipher are counterbalanced by one in which topical allusion forces her to enter the world outside the poems. The opening line of poem 79, *Lesbius est pulcer*, puns upon the *cognomen* of the radical demagogue P. Clodius Pulcher, *tr. pl.* 58 B.C.E.:⁴³

Lesbius est pulcer; quid ni? quem Lesbia malit
 quam te cum tota gente, Catulle, tua.
 sed tamen hic pulcer vendat cum gente Catullum
 si tria notorum savia reppererit.

Lesbius is pretty; how not? whom Lesbia prefers to you, Catullus, and your whole clan. Nevertheless, this pretty boy would sell Catullus and his clan, if he should be kissed hello by three acquaintances.

Cicero's frequent attacks upon his personal enemy Clodius, especially in the speeches following his return from exile in 57 B.C.E., include repeated references to youthful male prostitution and incest, while graphic allegations of oral perversion are flung at the ex-tribune's political associate Sex. Cloelius.⁴⁴ In view of the wide circulation these speeches received, it is

unlikely that Catullus could have framed his own invective charges independently of them. It is much more credible, rather, that he consciously appropriated Ciceronian rhetoric for his indictment of Clodius' dealings with "Lesbia"—now unmasked as one of the politician's three sisters—and potentially with the speaker himself. If we consequently approach the Catullan poem under the reasonable assumption that its audience is expected to know Cicero's *post reditum* orations already, we can determine that *one particular sister* is being singled out as "Lesbia."⁴⁵

Charges of incest against Clodius had originated with the *Bona Dea* trial of 61 B.C.E., when L. Lucullus brought forward slave-girls to testify that his former wife, the youngest of the three daughters of Ap. Claudius Pulcher (*cos.* 79), had been debauched by her brother (*Cic. Mil.* 73; *Plut. Caes.* 10.5 and *Cic.* 29.3–4; cf. *Luc.* 34.1; 38.1). By June of the following year (*Att.* 2.1.5), Cicero was maliciously transferring the smear from Lucullus' to Metellus' spouse (Wiseman 1969: 52–55). In a public letter to Lentulus Spinther (*Fam.* 1.9.15, written in December 54), he extends the charge still further: Clodius "had shown no more consideration for the *Bona Dea* than for his three sisters" (*non pluris fecerat Bonam Deam quam tris sorores*). Given the possibilities for confusion in the actual existence of three like-named women, all tarred by accusations of incest, it might appear more practical to identify the beloved by associating her with her present or former *vir*. If Catullus instead links her to her brother, it must be because she was already publicly bracketed together with him so closely that there was no need to take other siblings into account: the very mention of Clodius would have been enough to evoke a corresponding mental image of one, and only one, Clodia.

As we can see from Cicero's orations, this was indeed the case. Most references to Clodius' incest in the *post reditum* speeches are ambiguous, deliberately leaving unclear which sister is meant. Occasionally, though, Cicero takes pains to indicate that he is expressly speaking of Clodia Metelli. Thus he insinuates an unspeakable relationship with Cloelius, whose attachment to Metellus' widow, as well as to her brother, was well known (*Dom.* 25, 83; cf. *Att.* 2.12.2); he alludes to Clodius' preference for the "flashing eyes" that were her most noteworthy physical feature (*Har.* 38);⁴⁶ finally, in a sly inversion of the motif, he makes the brazen *meretrix* of the *pro Caelio* sexually initiate her timid younger brother (*Cael.* 36; cf. 32 and 78). Neither of the other sisters is ever singled out for comparable treatment. By February of 56 B.C.E., belief in Clodius' incestuous relations with his eldest sister had been so firmly implanted in the general public consciousness that Cicero could describe his own associates abusing the radical leader by chanting *omnia maledicta, versus etiam obscenissimi in Clodium et Clodiam* ("all kinds of insults, as well as the foulest verses

against Clodius and Clodia”) without needing to specify to his brother that the Clodia in question was his personal *bête noire* (QFr. 2.3.2). When he wishes to unsay those charges against her at the trial of Milo in 52, he must carefully repeat the circumstances of the original accusation brought against Clodius by his former brother-in-law.⁴⁷ It would seem that Cicero succeeded all too well in his attempt to blacken Clodia Metelli’s reputation: the rumor, as Plutarch observes (Cic. 29.3), was attached to her even to the exclusion of the other two sisters. In making use of the Ciceronian topos, then, Catullus was designating the woman with whom the story had become most commonly associated. Semantically, the collocation “Lesbius/Lesbia” must function exactly like Cicero’s *Clodium et Clodiam*, serving as an unambiguous reference to a known incestuous pair.

Why does the poet violate generic expectations by stripping Lesbia of her cryptonym, exposing her as a notorious celebrity, and turning his cycle of love poems into a roman à clef with clue obligingly supplied? Poem 79 draws an ethical parallel between Lesbia’s rejection of Catullus and his family in favor of Lesbius, on the one hand, and, on the other, Lesbius’ own mistreatment of Catullus and his family in order to obtain recognition from outside acquaintances. Taken literally, to begin with, the phrase *vendat cum gente Catullum* asserts that Lesbius would be ready to sell Catullus and his kin as slaves. Arbitrary reduction of free citizens to servile status might seem the act of a fictive tyrant. However, W. J. Tatum observes an interesting correlation between this hypothetical threat and the proscriptive aura of the Clodian law *de exilio Ciceronis*, which was “suspicious for its character as a *privilegium*” and its violation of customary legal protocols (1993: 38–40). Clodius’ attempt to strip Cicero of citizenship and property could be, and indeed subsequently was, described as the opening move in a perhaps more extensive campaign against the rank and fortunes of prosperous *boni*.⁴⁸

Since Lesbia and her partner have already been revealed as genuine public personalities, “to betray for money,” the idiomatic meaning of *aliquem/aliquid vendere* used frequently in political contexts, also comes into play here.⁴⁹ Lesbius is prepared both to “sell” and to “sell out” others, if necessary. Hence choice of a forbidden sexual partner and treacherousness in the public sphere are equated: each practice transgresses principle for selfish ends. Brother and sister are mutually drawn into each other’s symbolic and semantic field. Lesbius is eroticized, fitted to the stereotype of the pretty *puer delicatus* in quest of admirers. Correspondingly, Lesbia is politicized, securely associated with Cicero’s account of a sister who fosters her brother’s subversive plots even while submitting to his lust. Her rejection of Catullus, which up until this point appeared simply the habitual cruelty of the poetic love object, now becomes a paradigm of wider civic discord.

Thus Lesbia's exposure is yet another rhetorical strategy for joining the thematic concerns of the erotic epigrams with those of the overtly political poems accompanying them. Poem 79 appeals to Ciceronian invective in order to explain the genesis and the significance of Catullus' central elegiac trope, the *foedus amicitiae*. Application to the relations of lover and mistress of a vocabulary charged with wider social and political, as well as ethical, overtones is shown to be a necessary consequence of Lesbia's rank, her public image, and her activism. Poem 79 is therefore a key text for our understanding of the elegiac collection: Lesbia's adventitious connection with the theater of political intrigue resonates backward through all the preceding epigrams and will bear strongly upon those that follow, whether or not they concern her directly.

Lesbia and Her Lovers, II: Gellius

It is Catullus' practice to foreshadow the full emergence of a leading motif in his *libellus* by inserting anticipations of it among the preceding poems. The classic example for the polymetric collection is that of Furius and Aurelius, the Rosencrantz and Guildenstern types who make their initial appearance in 11, the concluding poem of the Lesbia cycle, and are shortly thereafter featured in the Juventius cycle, poems 15–26. Their premature arrival on the scene has the effect of linking the two poetic sequences to one another, ensuring dramatic continuity. Comparable examples of such proleptic patterning occur several times in the epigrams, other instances being the presence of Juventius in poem 81 and Quintius in 82. In this chapter, however, I will examine only the most striking occurrence, the intrusion of Gellius into the Rufus cycle.

The first twelve epigrams following 68 are focused upon Lesbia, her lover Rufus, and her brother Lesbius. Placed in their midst, however, are two ostensibly unrelated pieces about interfamilial adultery. Poem 74 alleges that Gellius has silenced a scolding paternal uncle (*patruus*) by seducing his aunt, an act professed to be the figurative equivalent of orally raping the uncle (3–6):

. . . patroi perdepsuit ipsam
uxorem et patruum reddidit Harpocraten.
quod voluit fecit: nam, quamvis irrumet ipsum
nunc patruum, verbum non faciet patruus.

. . . [Gellius] gave Uncle's own wife a thorough kneading and turned Uncle into Harpocrates.⁵⁰ He got his way, for, however much he screws Uncle himself now, Uncle won't say a word.

Its counterpart 78 deals with Gallus, himself a *patruus*, who voyeuristically promotes an affair between his nephew and the wife of another brother. This invites the cuckolded brother to retaliate by helping the same nephew seduce Gallus' wife, so that one uncle becomes a paradigm for the other (*patruus patruī monstret adulterium*, 78.6). A decadent *patruus* furthering his young kinsman's lust would be all the more scandalous because father's brothers were traditionally expected to oversee the morals of nieces and nephews and restrain sexual misconduct (Hickson 23–24). Poems 74 and 78 are thus linked by inversion: the pattern of injury is the same, but in the first the uncle is prevented from exercising his authority, while in the second he himself facilitates the crime. The generational scenario is reversed as well. Violations of domestic *pietas* were prefigured in poem 67, where a father had usurped the marital rights of his son; here the younger members of the family are wronging the elder.

Placed incongruously as they are amid Catullus' own grievances, 74 and 78 appear to be detached squibs removed from the serious concerns of the surrounding texts. In the remainder of the epigram collection, though, polemic motifs in the former poem are reiterated: we will hear more of oral sex, incest, and a *patruus* implicated in wrongdoing. Ironic presentation of Gellius as a successful adulterer points forward to the ensuing series of invectives in which he is indicted for even graver offenses. Meanwhile, the reprise of an analogous domestic scenario in 78 suggests a frequent societal incidence of immorality within the family.

Although seemingly unrelated to Lesbia's betrayals, the epigrams that sequentially follow 79 continue particular motifs of the poems with which they were juxtaposed. In 80, an opening remark about the paleness of Gellius' lips sets up the expectation of a conventional story line in which someone's pallor shows him to be in love. The whispered truth—that he performs fellatio—is confirmed by the telltale appearance of his partner's body and the visible residue that makes his own mouth *literally* white (Curran 24–25). This epigram takes up the *os impurum* motif of the two attacks immediately preceding it and casts it as a new aspersion upon Gellius, whose status as a favored polemic target is gradually emerging. Poem 81 brings onstage—proleptically, as we will see in the following chapter—Catullus' other love Juventius, a prominent figure in the *Passer* collection. Juventius is berated for preferring a rival described as “paler than a gilded statue” (*inaurata pallidior statua*, 4), a sinister phrase in view of the preceding epigram. Poem 82 then issues a warning to a Quintius who might be another of Lesbia's potential lovers, or even an admirer of Juventius: the exact threat posed is worded so indistinctly that readers at this point would not be sure, and, as we will see below, the conduct of Quintius himself is not really the epigram's chief concern. Poem 83, discussed above, humorously

asserts belief in Lesbia's secret passion for Catullus, betrayed by her devious way of speaking about him to her husband, while 84 pokes fun at Arrius' affected manner of speech—and reminds a contemporary audience of his recent political misfortunes. We will observe later that each of these epigrams sets the stage for others that follow.

With poem 85, we return to the emotional conflict of the earlier Lesbia epigrams, now articulated in its most compressed form:

Odi et amo. quare id faciam, fortasse requiris.
nescio, sed fieri sentio et excrucior.

I hate and I love. Why I do it, you may ask. I don't know, but I feel it
happening and am tortured.

Poems 70, 72, 75, 76, 85, and 87 form a coherent series in which Catullus' gradual recognition of Lesbia's unscrupulous nature only intensifies his sexual obsession. Distinct stages of that morbid passion are represented by the core transitional epigrams 72, 75, and 85, each of which is marked by progressively greater "condensation of thought and expression" (Thomson 1997: 514; cf. Arkins 1982: 94–96). Simultaneously, the speaker becomes more and more preoccupied with self alone. In the eight lines of poem 72, he makes a conscientious, though patently futile, attempt to explain his emotional conflict to his mistress in terms she can understand. Poem 75 addresses Lesbia in its opening couplet, but only to blame her for the psychic suffering that commands the speaker's whole attention; the totalizing contradictions of the last couplet indicate that, in actuality, "the world of the poem is Catullus' mind" (Fitzgerald 133). In 85, his dilemma is reduced to a single stark couplet. The elegant tension between intense emotion and intense pain, the chiasmus of motivated action (*quare . . . faciam*) and passive sensation (*fieri sentio*), excludes whatever is peripheral to interiority, including the very object of desire.⁵¹ Once this psychological impasse has been compacted into the concluding verb *excrucior*, the development of the theme ceases: nothing more remains to be communicated.

Thus poem 87 can only furnish a coda to the entire suite. Its very placement is an indication of its closural function: following the long hiatus between poems 79 and 85, the structure of the sequence now reverts to the classic A-B-A pattern in which two related texts are separated by a single contrasting piece.⁵² Lexical and thematic ring-composition provides one additional mark of closure:

Nulla potest mulier tantum se dicere amatam
vere, quantum a me Lesbia amata mea es.

nulla fides ullo fuit umquam in foedere tanta,
 quanta in amore tuo ex parte reperta mea est.

No woman is able to say she has been loved, *in truth*, as much as you, my Lesbia, were loved by me. No faith in any agreement was ever so great as was shown on my part to exist in loving you.

In its opening distich, poem 87 replicates the phraseology and rhetorical strategies of 70 while taking up the question of Lesbia's veracity broached in the former poem. The collocation *nulla . . . mulier . . . se dicere* is a verbal reminiscence of *nulli se dicit mulier*, the initial words of poem 70; the contextual situation is also broadly comparable, insofar as a woman is weighing Catullus' case against that of another lover. From a rhetorical viewpoint, however, the placement of the adverb *vere* in 87 offers the most evocative parallel with its earlier counterpart. The word occupies the same metrical position as *quam mihi* in 70.2, and in each instance the employment of enjambment before and dieresis immediately thereafter gives a semantic component the effect of surprise and emphasis. Logically, *vere* goes with the immediately preceding participle *amata*: Lesbia was "loved truly." Yet the recognizable echo of 70 invites the reader to take it as also modifying the verb in indirect discourse: no woman can "truly say" she was loved as much as Lesbia. Then the second couplet, with its joint mention of *fides* and *foedus*, reminds us of 76.3–4, in which fidelity to a given agreement is the defining quality of the *pietas* the speaker predicates of himself. Lastly, the use of the perfect tense throughout puts the whole matter to rest: this is a retrospective pronouncement in which the only certainty remaining is Catullus' conviction of his own fidelity (*ex parte . . . mea*) in the midst of deception.⁵³

The most unusual feature of the next four poems—which comprise, apart from 116, all the remaining epigrams in the Gellius cycle—is their clustering and ensuing movement toward a final revelation (Forsyth 1972–73: 177; Hickson-Hahn 11–16). Poems 88, 89, and 90 hammer home the charge of incest, each taking a somewhat different, but progressively more hyperbolic, approach. In the first, Gellius is consecutively accused of relations with mother, sister, and aunt, liaisons whose wickedness could not be exceeded even by the ultimate act of incest, self-fellation.⁵⁴ The next epigram, 89, extends the range of his conquests. He is *tenuis*, "thin," from sex with not only the aforementioned women but female kin everywhere (*omnia plena puellis / cognatis*, 3–4). Hence, although his erotic interests are restricted to what is forbidden for him to touch, he can find partners enough in his large family to account for his physical condition. In each poem a reference to Gellius' uncle, who at

88.3 is “not permitted to be a husband” (*patruum qui non sinit esse maritum*) and at 89.3 is called “obliging” (*bonus*), presumes familiarity with the situation described in 74 and thus creates a humorous chain of backward references (Hickson-Hahn 12–14).

Poem 90 takes a single incestuous involvement, the “unspeakable marriage” (*nefandum coniugium*) of Gellius and his mother, and spins off a preposterous follow-up. Catullus imagines a Zoroastrian *magus* born of their union (pedantically explaining in lines 3–4 that the *Persarum impia religio* prescribes just such an origin for its priests) in order to make due sacrifice to the sacred fire (5–6):

gratus ut accepto veneretur carmine divos
omentum in flamma pingue liquefaciens.

. . . so that auspiciously he may offer the gods a pleasing invocation,
melting the fatty caul in the flame.

This is indeed an outrageous conceit, but how does it fit into Catullus’ invective program? Thomson (1997) offers an ingenious solution: on another level, the poem is adroit literary polemic. Like Volusius’ *Annales* in poem 36, Gellius’ “fatty” (*pingue*) compositions—evoked through a pun on *carmen*—must be placed upon the purifying altar so as to achieve Callimachean slimness and liquidity.⁵⁵ If we accept that interpretation of the epigram, the situation in poem 116 is also illuminated. There Catullus had sent Gellius *carmina Battiadae* in an attempt to “soften” him (*te lenirem*, 116.3) and deflect the constant barrage of Gellius’ *tela infesta*. Catullus’ phraseology informs the reader that Gellius had been conducting a war of epigrams against him—squibs declaimed at *convivia* and circulated among friends and by word of mouth.⁵⁶ Confident of avoiding such *tela*, the speaker promises to reply in kind; the present series of lampoons, 74, 80, and 88–91, is that threatened payback.⁵⁷ It is natural, then, that Gellius’ epigrammatic style should be targeted along with his alleged sexual misconduct. Thus poem 90, by its position, anticipates the programmatic scenario of the final epigram in the collection, while that epigram, the first of the series in fictive time, provides the background to the Gellius cycle.

The crescendo formed by those three successive poems culminates in an indictment of incest all the worse for being, strictly, *not* incest:

Non ideo, Gelli, sperabam te mihi fidum
in misero hoc nostro, hoc perduto amore fore,
quod te cognossem bene constantemve putarem
aut posse a turpi mentem inhibere probro;

sed neque quod matrem nec germanam esse videbam
 hanc tibi, cuius me magnus edebat amor.
 et quamvis tecum multo coniungerer usu,
 non satis id causae credideram esse tibi.
 tu satis id duxti: tantum tibi gaudium in omni
 culpa est, in quacumque est aliquid sceleris.

Not for the following reason, Gellius, was I expecting you to be loyal to me in this wretched, this doomed love affair: that I knew you well and thought you dependable or able to keep your mind from shameful misconduct; but rather because I was aware that this woman, for whom a great love consumed me, was neither mother nor sister to you; and, although I was bound to you by long acquaintance, I had believed that was not enough of a reason for you. *You* thought it enough: you delight so much in every guilty action, in whatever holds some crime.

In this epigram the speaker abandons his normal posture of bitterly deceived lover or friend. From the beginning, Catullus says, he had no illusions about any potential for commitment and trustworthiness on his rival's part. Instead, he relied upon a technicality. Given the exclusiveness of Gellius' sexual preferences as stipulated in 89.5 (*nihil attingat, nisi quod fas tangere non est*), he assumed Lesbia, not being a blood relative, would be safe. It was Catullus' own connection with Gellius that provided an impetus for the latter to stretch a point: because of the long history of contact between the two men, Lesbia became an honorary relative, as it were, and so fair game. Poem 91 thus folds the series of invectives against Gellius into the Lesbia sequence, and, with its caustic irony, caps the epigrammatic indictment of Lesbia and her lovers. Insofar as Gellius' technically lawful relations with Lesbia turn out to fit his criminal profile, they function as one more trope for the gap between words and the ethical concepts to which they correspond, and, by extension, for both the perversion of *amicitia* and Lesbia's own lack of intelligibility.

Name Dropping

Catullan polemic is richly coded. When a prominent figure is accused of gross private conduct, the charges function as topical metaphors, employed not only to besmirch his reputation—although that is certainly one objective—but also imaginatively to evoke the sordidness of his political machinations.⁵⁸ Particular allegations are in turn integrated into

larger symbolic systems in which the processes of ingestion and excretion are closely related, with the contaminated mouth regularly assimilated to excretory orifices (Richlin 1988; 1992 [1983]: 148–51). For the initial half of the epigram collection, invective imagery falls into three general categories: fetidness of body or breath, oral sex (which produces foul breath), and incestuous relations, both “normal” and perverse. The first two motifs exhibit Roman writers’ collective “preoccupation with smell and disgusting physical details” (Richlin 1992 [1983]: 148). Incest, however, lies outside a metaphoric system organized around gustation and emission of bodily wastes: while it is a common motif in political invective, it appears to operate in Catullus’ epigrams as an independent topos.

W. J. Tatum correctly observes that an accusation of incest conveys “an impression of exclusivity” (1993: 34). By making use of this charge in poem 79, he adds, Catullus emphasizes the isolation and victimization of his speaker, who is socially alienated from the closed dyad formed by Lesbius and Lesbia. However, Tatum vehemently denies the metaphoric significance of Roman sexual invective, insisting that its purpose was solely “to blacken character” and thus destroy an opponent’s credibility. That pronouncement seems far too restrictive. As Catharine Edwards has shown, moralizing discourses on effeminacy (*mollitia*) and other forms of vice were deployed in order to negotiate numerous abstract issues of culture and power (1993: 63–97).⁵⁹ To achieve those ends, such discourses would have to operate on several planes simultaneously, and on a symbolic as well as a literal level. With its implication of criminal transactions among a tight-knit group, the incest allegation figuratively gestures toward covert political deals—such as the original pact of Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus that formed the First Triumvirate or the renewal of that pact at Luca in 56 B.C.E., at which time Clodius, formerly an enemy of Pompey, became his political ally and kinsman by marriage (W. J. Tatum 1999: 213). As political metaphor, the accusation consequently cuts both ways, suggesting on the one hand the secret arrangements made by great men for their own benefit and on the other the disadvantages imposed upon less prominent citizens by such intrigues.

Since the incest motif is a standard ingredient of Cicero’s anti-Clodian rhetoric, one object of its use, clearly, is to assist the reader in identifying “Lesbius.” The symbolic component of the accusation, however, hints at a preoccupation with a larger theater of political operations and automatically aligns Lesbia’s sexual misconduct with transgressions in that wider public sphere. Thus it seems reasonable to search for topical allusions in other epigrams that concern her infidelity. Historically situated details turn up in both the Gellius and the Rufus poems, although in each instance they are implicated in prosopographical disagreements. Let us turn first to the chronological issues surrounding Gellius.

Catullus' claim that Gellius is having incestuous relations with his mother and sister recalls an incident that took place more than a decade earlier, when L. Gellius (*cos.* 72 B.C.E., *cens.* 70), sitting in judgment at a family tribunal with almost the entire senate called in as advisors (*paene universo senatu adhibito in consilium*, Val. Max. 5.9.1), deliberated the fate of his son, who was accused of seducing his stepmother and plotting to kill Gellius himself. Thanks to his father's restraint in handling these explosive charges, the young man received the opportunity to clear his name and was acquitted; the elder Gellius thus became an *exemplum* of paternal moderation. The problem of the relationship between the son of L. Gellius and the Gellius of Catullan invective has vexed commentators. Earlier scholarship identified the two,⁶⁰ but Wiseman's demonstration (1974: 119–29) that the person tried in the family council was the *father* of Catullus' false friend has won widespread acceptance. Still, the scandal attached to the father might well have inspired Catullus' accusations against the son. As is obvious in Cicero's transfer of a like contention from the wife of Lucullus to her sisters (above, p. 81), rumors of incest associated with one member of a family are, by their very nature, readily extended to other relatives and could easily be passed down from one generation to another. It is even conceivable (though admittedly we have no supporting evidence) that "incest," as an invective topos, had become attached to the line of consular Gellii, just as it perpetually hounded Clodius and his siblings.

This connection between Catullus' Lesbius and Gellius is underscored by an explicit verbal echo: the first verse of poem 89 corresponds grammatically and rhetorically to the opening line of 79 (*Gellius est tenuis: quid ni? cui tam bona mater. . . .* = *Lesbius est pulcher: quid ni? quem Lesbia malit. . . .*). In each case outward appearance testifies to character: if Lesbius' physical attractiveness reflects his lack of manly *virtus*, Gellius' leanness betrays his addiction to his own peculiar vice. As a literary tactic, the parallelism imparts structural coherence to the epigram collection by strengthening thematic links. Yet it possesses an extratextual significance as well. Through a meticulous review of the evidence, Wiseman has confirmed Münzer's firm assertion⁶¹ that Catullus' Gellius was L. Gellius Publicola, grandson of the censor and half-brother of the orator M. Messalla Corvinus; W. J. Tatum follows up this identification by offering a perceptive reading of Catullus' politically pregnant subtext.⁶² Gellius, he notes,

stemmed from a family which, as Wiseman observes, was keen to maintain through the generations its traditional affinities, thus providing a notional connection between the *scelus* of incest and a social posture to

which Catullus objects elsewhere, most clearly in Poem 79, in which epigram Lesbia's sexual preference for Lesbius over Catullus creates a crisis in which our poet exploits the topos of incest to mount an attack on the aristocratic exclusivity of the patrician Claudii. Like Lesbius, Gellius represents the noble whose presumed prerogatives shunt aside Catullus' claims to Lesbia's affections and do so in an atmosphere heavy with intimidation. And, like the Lesbius of 79, Gellius possesses the rank and the station to inflict harm on Catullus, however legitimate our poet's complaints. Worse than Lesbius, however, Gellius posed as Catullus' friend—or perhaps one should rather say that, in the scenario constructed by Catullus, the poet failed until the end to comprehend the perilous circumstances of his role as *amicus inferior*. (1997: 499)

In view of these literary implications, it is perhaps not surprising to find epigraphical documentation of a marital connection between L. Gellius Publicola and a young satellite of the Clodian party. For the celebrated trial of M. Caelius Rufus *de vi* in 56 B.C.E., in which Clodia herself appeared as a star prosecution witness, the leading prosecutor was seventeen-year-old L. Sempronius Atratinus. Two Attic dedicatory inscriptions, probably from the triumviral period, indicate that Gellius Publicola was married to Sempronia Atratina, the young man's sister.⁶³ In addition, one of the charges brought against Caelius during that trial dealt with the property of a certain Palla (*de bonis Pallae*, Cic. *Cael.* 23), and the way in which Quintilian refers to this particular count indicates that he regarded it as important.⁶⁴ Although we lack information about the allegation, we know that Gellius' mother was named Palla (Dio 47.24.6). Since Atratinus was taking action against Caelius in retaliation for Caelius' own prosecution of his natural father (see below, p. 92),⁶⁵ it is plain that the trial was very much "a family affair" (R. G. Austin 74) to which Clodius, and Clodia visibly, lent their support.

Still, this link between a target of Catullus' epigrams and the cast of characters involved in the prosecution of Caelius might seem coincidental, were it not for the corroboration added by apparent references to that same trial in poems 69 and 71. At this point, however, we find ourselves immersed in heated controversy, for it has long been debated whether the "Caelius" addressed in poems 58 and 100 is in fact M. Caelius Rufus and, if so, whether he is also to be identified with the "Rufus" of poems 69 and 77. The fact that "Rufus" is presented as Lesbia's lover makes the supposition quite tempting, for Cicero's colorful account of Caelius' stormy affair with Clodia Metelli in the *pro Caelio* would have ensured that the earlier liaison between the defendant and the key prosecution witness became common knowledge in elite circles, and indeed all over the city.⁶⁶

Working through the *libellus*, a contemporary Roman recognizing that “Lesbius” in 79 was actually P. Clodius Pulcher might easily look back two poems and connect Clodius’ now-infamous sister, belatedly, with the “Rufus” of 77.⁶⁷

Even authorities skeptical of other proposed identifications admit the possibility that the former friend who snatched away *omnia nostra bona* and who is now denounced as *nostrae crudele venenum / vitae . . . nostrae pestis amicitiae* (77.4–6) might well be Caelius Rufus.⁶⁸ But what about the malodorous Rufus named in 69 and attacked anonymously in its pendant 71? To assume that two distinct men with the same name are involved seems overly convoluted: as we have seen above, a sequential reading builds, through repetition of the “false friend” motif, to the ultimate disclosure of Rufus’ perfidy. The supposition that Catullus would not mock the personal hygiene of Caelius Rufus, who was known for his taste and elegance, seems the only reason not to group the three poems together (R. G. Austin 148–49; Arkins 1983: 309); and that objection can be put aside if the references to body odor can be shown to make sense on other than a purely literal level.

At *Cael.* 26 Cicero speaks of someone named Bestia in such a way as to imply that his association with the prosecution of Caelius was understood and taken for granted.⁶⁹ This man, whom Cicero claims as a friend, is readily identifiable with the L. Calpurnius Bestia he had successfully defended in February 56 on a count of bribery (*QFr.* 2.3.6). In 1909 Friedrich Münzer clarified Bestia’s interest in the present case: an inscription from Thessaly (*ILS* 9461) indicates that Caelius’ accuser Sempronius Atratinus was the son of a Bestia, and Münzer proposed that Atratinus was his biological son, who had been emancipated and adopted into the Sempronian gens. The charge that Caelius had lodged against Atratinus’ father involved bribery in pursuit of political office, *ambitus* (*Cael.* 16, 76); it follows that he had instigated the attack on L. Calpurnius Bestia in which Cicero had come to Bestia’s aid. Caelius’ original indictment, moreover, seemingly implicated colleagues in the college of the Luperci, of which he and Bestia were both members, for Cicero makes a lame joke about its rough-and-ready affiliates habitually accusing one another (*siquidem non modo nomina deferunt inter se sodales, sed etiam commemorant sodalitatem in accusando*, 16). When these clues are combined, it appears that Catullus’ remark about a *mala . . . bestia* interfering with Caelius’ amorous intentions (69.7–8) may be taken as a play on Bestia’s name, while his references to goats are best explained by the rustic, and in fact goatish, associations of the Lupercalia, the ritual *lustrum* celebrated by the college each February 15.⁷⁰ Indeed, the comic designation of underarm odor as *sacer . . . hircus* in 71.1 may allude to the *sacer hircus* sacrificed during that rite (*Ov. Fas.*

2.441). Finally, given these other puns, it is quite conceivable that the gout, *podagra*, afflicting Rufus at the conclusion of the second poem also conceals an etymological play on words, here involving the *nomen* “Clodius/Clodia,” which is derived from *claudus*, “lame” (Nicholson 259). In support of that possibility, we can cite a witticism of Publilius Syrus: when a discussion arose over the meaning of *otium molestum* (unmistakably in respect to Catullus 51.13), Syrus replied *podagrici pedes*.⁷¹ If *pedes* puns on “(metrical) feet,” *podagrici* could connote both “halting verse” and “verse addressed to Clodia.”⁷²

Scrollwork

When we allow that poems 69 and 71 are covert attacks on Caelius Rufus, derisively summoning up claims made in the course of Bestia’s trial that apparently recoiled upon their author during his own prosecution, we can no longer dismiss them as trivial lampoons inserted to contrast with the paired Lesbia epigrams 70 and 72. Because they hint at Clodian involvement in the Bestia affair and raise questions about the motives behind Caelius’ suit, their thrust is altogether political. Again, since rhetorical strategies as well as the polemic motif of incest tie the Gellius epigrams firmly to poem 79, that cycle too must form part of the same thematic system. Thus the epigrams concerned with Lesbia’s lovers should not be taken as mere outbursts of private jealousy, for their ostensible function of lover’s complaint has become quite secondary. Incorporated into the elegiac *libellus*, these poems operate as political and artistic statements, integral to the thematic program of the volume; no less than the Lesbia poems, they broach questions of interpersonal trust and poetic intelligibility.⁷³

The competent reader reflecting upon the progression of the epigram series—and perhaps rolling back the scroll in order to reexamine its contents—would observe that, in directing attention to L. Calpurnius Bestia and, through him, to the celebrated trial of M. Caelius Rufus, the opening epigrams of the collection recall a recent occasion when the credibility of Clodia Metelli’s word was officially challenged as being no better than that of a prostitute whose status as *infamis* would render his or her testimony worthless before the law.⁷⁴ Familiarity with Cicero’s actual defense of Caelius renders the reference even more meaningful, because in that speech the orator portrays the purportedly civilized ambience in which Clodia and her associates operate—the world of the *urbani*—as a sink of lies and perjury. At the outset, he draws a controlling distinction between slander (*maledictio*) and criminal accusation. The latter builds a logical case and confirms it through witnesses, while the former aims only

to bring into disrepute: “if done recklessly, this is called ‘mud-slinging’ (*convicium*), if wittily, *urbanitas*” (6). He draws his blanket attack upon Clodia’s reputation to a close by asking jurors to decide “whether a shameless, bold, angry female seems to have invented (*finxisse*) this accusation” (55) and subsequently tropes the story of an abortive sting operation at the Senian baths, one key element in the prosecution’s case, as “a mime-libretto (*fabella*) by a seasoned authoress (*poetriae*) of many plots” (64). Lastly, in a passage studded with neoteric catchphrases and clichés from the *sermo amatorius*, he enjoins the supposed witnesses to that incident—dandified young gentlemen who attend Clodia’s dinner parties and preen themselves in her company—to refrain from involving themselves in matters too weighty for them:

. . . quam volent in conviviiis faceti, dicaces, non numquam etiam ad vinum deserti sint, alia fori vis est, alia triclini; alia subselliorum ratio, alia lectorum; non idem iudicum commissatorumque conspectus; lux denique longe alia est solis, alia lychnorum. quam ob rem excutiemus omnes istorum delicias, omnes ineptias, si prodierint. sed me audiant, navent aliam operam, aliam ineant gratiam, in aliis se rebus ostendent, vigeant apud istam mulierem venustate, dominantur sumptibus, haereant, iaceant, deserviant; capiti vero innocentis fortunisque parcant. (67)

However witty they may be at banquets, however sharp, sometimes even fluent, over wine, the forum means one thing, the dining-room another; sitting on witness-benches is a different matter from reclining on couches; confronting judges is not the same as confronting drinking partners; sunlight, in short, is far removed from lamplight. Accordingly, we will shake out all their affectations and all their gaucheries, if they show themselves. But have them hear me out: let them pursue a dissimilar course, let them court favor some other way, let them show off otherwise, let them succeed in that lady’s eyes through their physical attractions, let them outdo each other in expenditures, let them attach themselves, let them lie prostrate, let them be enslaved—but let them spare the life and fortunes of an innocent man.

Catullus’ allusions to the trial of Caelius and to Cicero’s *pro Caelio* thus function as a collective linchpin for the entire nexus of thematic implications traced out in the present chapter. Insofar as “Lesbia” is the avatar of Callimachean poetics, her verbal dishonesty encapsulates a contemporary privileging of superficial ostentation over substance, of melodramatic pathos over the sublime. Insofar as she is a recognizable fictive analogue for the public figure Clodia, her assertions cannot be believed, and her

betrayal of the speaker's *officium* stands for an aristocratic will to power dispensing with traditional obligations of fidelity to lesser *amici*. And, insofar as her lovers, or at least those named in the epigram book, are all directly or indirectly connected with the prosecution of Caelius Rufus, "Lesbia's" carnal promiscuity—in addition to echoing Cicero's allegations in the course of that trial—becomes a metonymy for a perversion of the *mos maiorum*, a *pestis* spread by illicit sexual (that is, political) congress, polluting both interpersonal relations and language. The remainder of the epigrams show how that perversion has already leached into a range of other social contexts.

CHAPTER FOUR



Fecund Corruption

Surveying the arrangement of 69–92, we observed, as the reading itself progressed, a unifying pattern of thematic connections unfolding from what had seemed to be only loosely related epigrams. Reminiscences of Cicero’s oratorical attacks on Clodius and his associates, together with covert hints at persons involved in the forensic struggle between Caelius Rufus and Calpurnius Bestia in 56 B.C.E., link instances of personal betrayal by Lesbia and her lovers to recent political happenings. The disloyalty of such individuals is symptomatic of a more pervasive alienation of words from their accustomed meanings. Dissociation has apparently impinged even upon poetic language, producing a loss of artistic confidence on the part of the speaker. While most of the texts discussed in the preceding chapter fit readily into this pattern, some might still appear incongruous. Hence we will first examine the relationship of poems 81, 82, 84, and 86 to a broad metatextual preoccupation with semantics and social communication before turning to the more historically situated poems 93–116.

Beautiful Lesbia

It may be enlightening to begin our analysis with poem 86—which, though it seems out of place in the midst of the darker elegiac texts dealing with Lesbia, nevertheless provides insight into their self-reflexive implications. Here the speaker compares the attractions of his mistress with those of another superstar:

Quintia formosa est multis. mihi candida, longa,
recta est: haec ego sic singula confiteor,

totum illud formosa nego: nam nulla venustas,
 nulla in tam magno est corpore mica salis.
 Lesbia formosa est, quae cum pulcerrima tota est,
 tum omnibus una omnis surripuit Veneres.

For many, Quintia is “beautiful.” To me she’s fair, tall, and stately: I grant these individual points as stipulated. But I deny that word “beautiful” in its totality, for there’s no charm, no bit of spice in such a big body. Lesbia is beautiful: not only is she altogether the most good-looking, but she also has filched all charms from all others.

While Quintia is a striking, Junoesque figure, she cannot be styled *formosa*, Catullus believes, for she lacks the necessary attributes of grace and wit. Papanghelis offers a convincing explanation for this pronouncement: both women are being evaluated according to the principles of Callimachean aestheticism. Quintia’s large size tells against her, as does her appeal to the multitude (*multis*) in contrast to the select few, whereas Lesbia’s *venustas* is associated with “modesty of size and slenderness of form, which are central preoccupations of the Neoteric-Callimachean poetics” (1991: 385).¹

This playful invocation of Callimachean principles appears, to some critics, merely perfunctory; for Papanghelis it does no more than add a gratuitous literary twist to an actual σύγκρισις—a “beauty contest,” as it were—between two recognized femmes fatales. Yet, like many other pieces in the corpus, the epigram can also be approached as a programmatic declaration disguised as occasional poem.² On that hypothesis, Catullus is claiming that his verse, personified as “Lesbia,” is superior to another type of writing represented by the name “Quintia.” Callimachus had furnished a model for speaking of a composition as a woman when, in the *Aetia* prologue, he dismissed the μεγάλη γυνή of a predecessor and made Apollo advocate keeping a slender (λεπταλή) muse (fr. 1.12 and 24 Pfeiffer).³ The convention of describing literary products in terms of the female body, then, was already established in Hellenistic times. Carrying the trope one step further, Roman orators of the late Republic developed a complete metonymic system for drawing analogies between the style of the literary product and the physique of its male composer. This undertaking was stimulated, as Keith has shown, by vehement dispute between the proponents of a plain, or “Atticist,” and a robust, or “Asiatic,” manner of speaking. Catullus’ great friend Licinius Calvus was a leading representative of Atticist rhetorical practice; his ongoing debate with Cicero over the merits of their respective styles was couched throughout in anatomical metaphors.⁴ As neoteric poet, he set a further

precedent for the Augustan elegists, who subsequently imposed this figurative system upon the fine bodies of the slim poet-lover and his lissome beloved.

Catullus is an outspoken admirer of Calvus' speaking style, as is evident from poems 14 and 53. The present epigram appears to be an experimental exercise in turning Atticist oratorical theory to poetic ends. All but one of the descriptive adjectives predicated of Quintia and Lesbia are likewise technical terms of rhetoric or poetics. Applied to writing, *candidus* means "clear, lucid, unambiguous"; *rectus* is "direct, straightforward"; and *longus* is "extended"⁵ or, in a bad sense, "prolix" (s.v. *OLD*). *Sal*, "wit," is an indispensable weapon of the orator (Cic. *Orat.* 87–90; cf. *de Orat.* 2.236) as well as an attribute of titillating *versiculi* (Catul. 16.7), and writings, no less than their authors, should be *venustus*, "graceful, neat."⁶ *Pulchritudo* and its cognates are applied to the "pleasing" or "attractive" element in a speech or text, although they can of course be used ironically (*tua illa pulchra laudatio*, Cic. *Phil.* 2.91). Only *formosus* is not found in a literary context, which is precisely what Catullus emphasizes with *illud formosa*, "that word 'formosa'," putting the quoted expression outside the grammatical construction (Fordyce *ad loc.*). In its strictest sense, this adjective had originally been used of a well-proportioned, vigorous body, whether human or animal;⁷ from Cicero's time on, and especially in verse composed under Alexandrian influence, it also conveys a sense of graceful distinction when describing a person, male or female. Applied to a literary work, however, it appears to be a reflex of *formare* in the sense "compose a speech" (e.g., Cic. *de Orat.* 2.36) and to function as a catchphrase for "well-turned" verse.

But who is Quintia, or, rather, what is she? Apparently she is not the mistress of some poetic rival; her name is not linked with that of any known republican-era writer. Observing that it is "the feminine of an historical Roman and patrician name," Nielsen (263) proposes that she is affiliated with a native Roman aesthetic, as opposed to Lesbia, who embodies a "melding together of Greek and Roman sources of inspiration." I would advance this hypothesis a little further: Quintia and Lesbia stand for contrasting approaches to the Latin elegiac distich, one traditional and the other innovative. As Ross (1969: 115–37) demonstrated through close analysis of vocabulary, style, and meter and Duhigg has confirmed by statistical examination of certain metrical elements, particularly elision, Catullus' handling of the elegiac couplet in poems 65 through 68 is quite different from his practice in the shorter epigrams. The first group, which Ross terms the "neoteric elegiacs" and Duhigg simply the "elegies," displays (with the noteworthy exception of 68a) novel technical features reminiscent of both the polymetrics and 64, the neoteric

epyllion. Such features are noticeably absent in the epigrams proper, where Catullus allows himself much more liberty in elision while eschewing such verbal embellishments as compounds and diminutives, Greek-flavored expressions, learned geographical and mythical references, and the entire “vocabulary of *urbanitas*.”⁸

There are, however, exceptions to that general rule. Poem 86 is one conspicuous example, for, as Ross notes, “the polymetric vocabulary of *urbanitas* makes its rare appearance here” (1969: 58). Together with the familiar nouns *venustas*, *sal*, and *Veneres* (cf. 3.1 and 13.12), the thrice-repeated *formosus* is a key crossover term. Adjectives in *-osus* have a Grecizing quality, convey a note of colloquial sophistication, and are accordingly common in both the polymetrics and the *carmina maiora*; but they turn up only five times in the epigrams, with three of the five instances occurring in this one poem. Content accounts for the presence of neoteric language, for Lesbia is said to possess those sophisticated virtues that Quintia lacks—virtues also emblematic of a neoteric poetics. Reprising her role in the *Passer*, then, the Lesbia of 86 becomes a “written woman,” Maria Wyke’s term for the female literary character who serves as “a token or symbol of her author’s practice of writing” (1987a: 173).⁹ Catullus’ critique of Quintia’s attributes may accordingly be construed as literary polemic in which she and Lesbia figure two ways of treating the pentameter couplet. As opposed to old-fashioned epigrams affecting an unequivocal (*candida*), pleonastic (*longa*), and straightforward (*recta*) style, Catullan elegiac verse is marked by its polish and clever, racy diction.

Thus “Lesbia” epitomizes what the neoteric epigram *ought to do*—that is, to deploy the resources of language deftly so as to make an amusing point. Yet in the extant collection there are very few epigrams that meet such criteria. Instead, the reader regularly encounters strained rhetoric and harsh metrical effects, especially—as we have already observed—in those very poems where Catullus questions the meaning of his mistress’ ambiguous statements and unsuccessfully attempts to paper over a fundamental breach in both knowledge and language. With their repetitive, sometimes contorted phraseology and awkward elisions, those epigrams are anything but *formosa*, “well-turned,” in the literary sense. Accordingly, we must wonder why Lesbia, as the object of the speaker’s desire within the epigrammatic sequence, herself fails to inspire the kind of accomplished literary product she exemplifies in this programmatic text.

To the sequential reader of the *libellus*, one explanation should readily come to mind. At 68.136–37 Catullus resolves to bear with what he terms the “occasional” (*rara*) transgressions of his mistress “so as not to be—in

the manner of the slow-witted (*stultorum more*)—overly troublesome (*molesti*).” In the two adjectives *stultus* and *molestus* we hear Lesbia’s own inflections, the patronizing tone of aristocratic sophistication, and we note that the speaker’s attempt to conform to her way of thinking is not achieved without difficulty. We further observe that her language in poem 70, for all its amusing hyperbole, is glib: ostensibly professing love, she smoothly evades actual commitment. Verbal finesse glosses over a lack of ethical, as well as emotive, depth: hence at 72.5–6 the speaker who at last understands her (*nunc te cognovi*) finds her *multo . . . vilior et levior*. Her utter absence of moral sensibility is, in fact, the basic reality he must face: that Lesbia might even *want* to be chaste is, he finally admits, not possible (*non quaero . . . quod non potis est, [ut] esse pudica velit*, 76.23–24). If the rhetorical panache so essential to *urbanitas* has encompassed such a crisis in values, and thereby opened up such a profound gap between words and their intended meanings, the only strategy available to a poet who wishes to convince us of the sincerity of his utterances is to put them into syntactically difficult and metrically harsh verse. Catullus thus develops the stylistic principles of simplicity and directness advocated by his friend Calvus into a poetics of deliberate dissonance, whose first aim is to force the reader to recognize and accept the truth of what is being said.

Themes to Come

To the same degree that Lesbia, the embodiment of *urbanitas*, represents the ideal reader of the polymetric *libellus*, the youth Juventius—Catullus’ other fickle beloved—acts as her foil.¹⁰ Poems 15 through 26, the cycle of lampoons directed at his suitors Furius and Aurelius, characterize them as impoverished and on the make—hence their conveniently descriptive names derived from *fur*, “thief,” and *aurum*, “gold.” In keeping with his own *redender Name*, Juventius himself comes across as naïve and easily led astray. Aurelius’ constant attendance betrays his designs on the boy (*nam simul es, iocaris una, / haerens ad latus omnia experiris*, 21.5–6), while Catullus’ chief fear is that Juventius will be reduced to the same meager circumstances as his self-styled admirer (*nunc ipsum id doleo, quod esurire / a te mi puer et sitire discet*, 10–11). Furius is ridiculed for having “neither slave nor money-box” (*arca*) at 23.1, repeated three times in the succeeding poem with only a change of case in the last line (24.5, 8, 10). Advised that he would have done better to bestow fabulous wealth upon such a man instead of his favors, Juventius responds in bewilderment, *quid? non est homo bellus?* (24.7). Like *lepidus*, *venustus*, and *urbanus*, the adjective *bellus* (“stylish”) is ordinarily a term of praise in neoteric poetry; here,

though, it connotes slickness and superficiality. Juventius judges by external appearance only, without understanding that outward polish may deceive. Thus the boy is far from being a good reader of persons or poems.

However, Catullus sometimes acknowledges in the polymetrics that other observers do not necessarily agree with his own idea of what is *bonus* and *bellus*. This point is handily made in 22, one of the poems interposed in the Juventius cycle, where an opportunity to pronounce judgment is actually passed up. Suffenus, although *venustus et dicax et urbanus* ("charming and salty and refined," 2) in his social intercourse, loses all claim to sophistication as soon as he begins to write. Yet, Catullus goes on, he is never happier or more impressed by himself than when scribbling verse. Each of us, he concludes, has his blind spot: *neque est quisquam / quem non in aliqua re videre Suffenum / possis* ("there is no one whom you could not perceive as Suffenus in some respect," 18–20). Passages where the speaker's appraisal is openly questioned are not hard to find. Asinius Marrucinus thinks it *salsum*, "witty," to filch napkins from careless fellow-diners, persisting in that belief even after being told the practice is crude and unattractive (*non credis mihi?* 12.6). In poem 14 Sulla the elementary school teacher patently disagrees with Catullus and Calvus over what constitutes good poetry. Worthless as Catullus thinks Mamurra is, his embezzled wealth nevertheless gives him access to bedrooms and transforms him into an Adonis (29.6–8).¹¹ Poem 36 shows the speaker and his *puella* at odds over who should be pronounced *pessimus poeta*, "worst poet of all"—or, rather, over the norm by which poetic inadequacy is to be measured. In Cisalpine Gaul, finally, Mamurra's ugly mistress is deemed *bella* and even compared with Lesbia, causing Catullus to write off his contemporaries as having neither taste nor wit, *o saeculum insipiens et infectum!* (43.8). Conversely—with the obvious exception of poem 86, where Quintia's following is accepted and where echoes of polymetric language signify that neoteric criteria of style, in more than one sense, are on the table—the value-judgments of the epigrams are dogmatic and absolute. Granted, they occasionally leave room for tacit recognition of other perspectives: the Juventius of 99 finds Catullus' mouth as objectionable as Catullus finds those of Lesbios in 79 or Aemilius in 97, and the latter is even credited with a girlfriend, unfastidious though she may be. Still, the latter half of the epigram collection gives the impression that certain positions taken in the polymetrics are no longer maintained and that neoteric mores, as well as neoteric poetics, should be open to review.

Thus in poem 81 Juventius makes the first of his two appearances in the present *libellus*. Again he is rebuked, this time more impatiently, for lack of critical judgment:

Nemone in tanto potuit populo esse, Iuventi,
 bellus homo, quem tu diligere inciperes,
 praeterquam iste tuus moribunda ab sede Pisauri
 hospes inaurata pallidior statua,
 qui tibi nunc cordi est, quem tu praeponere nobis
 audes, et nescis quod facinus facias?

Was there no other “man of style” in this great population, Juventus, that you might go and fall in love with apart from that stranger of yours, paler than a gilded statue, from the crumbling town of Pisaurum, whom you now cherish, whom you dare to prefer to me, without knowing the crime you’re committing?

Bellus homo, ironically reiterated from 24.7, sets the poem’s agenda.¹² The wrongness of this opinion is exposed in the central distich, which modulates from the colloquial scorn of *iste tuus* to elevated poetic diction and likely burlesque of a classic tag.¹³ Like other adjectives in *-ilebundus*, *moribunda* is at home in the epic and tragic registers. Structural and lexical similarities between *moribunda ab sede Pisauri* and Vergil’s *angusta ab sede Pelori* (A. 3.687) imply a common model, perhaps a line from early tragedy. *Hospes* is best explained as a calque on ξένος in the sense of “foreigner, stranger to Rome”: such a bilingual play on words again hints at parody. Finally, the comparison *inaurata pallidior statua* also belongs, at least formally, to high lyric style. The pompous and affected phraseology of the entire couplet, apart from the first three words, satirizes the pretensions of Juventius’ admirer. Meanwhile, Juventius’ own attraction to what is showy but false is encapsulated in the image of the gilded, not gold, statue to which his lover is compared. The boy’s failure to weigh background and character can be equated, by analogy, with the rashness of popular judgment in conferring civic honors, as epitomized by the statue; his foolhardiness and lack of moral insight are thus capable of being condemned in ethical terms as a *facinus*. This text is proleptic because it challenges the basis of commonly accepted value-judgments—what is *bellus* to the eye is not so in substance—and maps that sardonic gap between language and referent upon the political preoccupations of the later epigrams.

Quintius, mentioned for the first time in poem 82, is an enigmatic individual. Unlike other male figures encountered thus far in the epigram collection, he is not recorded as active in Roman political and social circles and, on the strength of poem 100, is thought to be merely a fellow-townsmen from Verona.¹⁴ The epigram itself presents no clue to the relationship between Catullus and the addressee, telling us merely that he poses an obstacle to the speaker’s continued possession of what means most to him:

Quinti, si tibi vis oculos debere Catullum
aut aliud si quid carius est oculis,
eripere ei noli, multo quod carius illi
est oculis, seu quid carius est oculis.

Quintius, if you want Catullus to owe his eyes to you, or whatever else is more precious than his eyes, do not snatch from him what is much more precious to him than his eyes or whatever there is more precious than his eyes.

While contextual vagueness makes its application difficult to grasp, the epigram nevertheless attains, purely as verbal construct, a high degree of poeticity. Citing it as an illustration of Catullus' struggles to attain greater intensity of expression within the epigrammatic genre, Quinn is impressed by the achievement involved in "sorting out this complicated pattern of thought and compressing it into four lines" (1971 [1959]: 41–42).¹⁵ In his later edition and commentary, he expands on his original idea: poem 82 takes its departure from the colloquialism *tibi oculos debere* and analyzes the import of that everyday phrase. The triple reiteration of the expression *carius est oculis* gives the impression that the poet "has asked himself if he really meant what he had said, had decided he did, and repeated the statement. One feels the second pentameter should be read more deliberately than the first" (1973a: 417).

Thus we may do better to construe poem 82 not as a reflection of personal circumstances or a reaction to outside events but as an experiment in defamiliarizing language. For the speaker of the elegiac *libellus*, even the common formulas of social intercourse are suspect: Catullus' multiple elisions in the final line of poem 73, *quam modo qui me unum atque unicum amicum habuit*, express as much scorn and contempt for this banality as self-pity at his own betrayal.¹⁶ Just as he has done earlier—by the contrast of *amare* with *bene velle* at 72.7–8 and 75.3–4, by the rejection of *frustra* as a descriptive adverb in 77.1–2 and the reaffirmation of *eripuisti* in lines 4 and 5 of the same poem—Catullus is testing the semantic content of an expression to find out whether it retains any vestigial credibility. The playful use of *oculus* as a metonym of endearment, as in the expression *plus oculis amare* at 3.5 and 14.1 and the epithet *ocelle* attached to Sirmio in 31.2, now comes under scrutiny: what does it mean to esteem something as much as, or more than, sight, and what, in fact, can be so esteemed? While the quatrain provides no answer to that semiotic puzzle, it does serve notice that, like the catchword *bellus* in the preceding poem, other routine applications of the jargon of *urbanitas* can no longer be taken for

granted in the epigram collection, at least not whenever the speaker is fully committed to expressing his thought.

Approaching the epigram from a different quarter, we may observe its preoccupation with assessing value, another theme it shares with poem 81.¹⁷ Quintius' own capacity for doing so is faulty, since he does not grasp why the person or object he pursues is so important to Catullus. In this he is like the boorish Marrucinus of poem 12, who pinches a napkin but is ignorant of the private meanings that impart to it a richer symbolic texture (Nappa 2001: 109–10). Certain poems in the vicinity of 82—especially the Lesbia epigrams 75, 76, and 87, all of which complain of her indifference to the singular merits of Catullus' devotion—take up the same issue. Simultaneously, the poem brings to light the corollary notion of commodity. Insofar as Catullus, in exchange for not being deprived of what is dearer to him than his eyes (if anything is), will owe Quintius his eyes (or whatever is dearer), he is the loser in the transaction either way. The profitable reciprocity in transactions of *amicitia*—the principle that the service bartered for service, though different in kind, ought to be of a corresponding usefulness to the beneficiary—is ironically invoked. This does not reemerge immediately as the *libellus* proceeds, but it will become the central focus of poem 110, where the economic aspect of the behavior of Aufillena, Quintius' beloved, is ruthlessly dissected.

If there is one piece in the collection that displays the wit and technical brilliance pronounced essential to the neoteric epigram in Catullus' programmatic manifesto, it is certainly poem 84, the splendid lampoon—justly famous even in antiquity—on Arrius' mistreatment of the aspirate:¹⁸

Chommoda dicebat, si quando commoda vellet
dicere, et insidias Arrius hinsidias,
et tum mirifice sperabat se esse locutum,
cum quantum poterat dixerat hinsidias.
credo, sic mater, sic liber avunculus eius,
sic maternus avus dixerat atque avia.
hoc misso in Syriam requierant omnibus aures:
audibant eadem haec leniter et leviter,
nec sibi postilla metuebant talia verba,
cum subito affertur nuntius horribilis,
Ionios fluctus, postquam illuc Arrius isset,
iam non Ionios esse sed Hionios.

“Chinterests,” Arrius used to say whenever he meant to say “interests,” and “chintrigue” for “intrigue,” and then he presumed he had spoken marvelously well when he had said “chintrigue” as loudly as he could. I’m

sure his mother, his freeborn¹⁹ mother's brother, his maternal grandfather and grandmother all spoke in this fashion. When he was sent off to Syria everyone's ears were given a rest. They were hearing the same sounds pronounced smoothly and softly, and words such as those did not fear for themselves in future—when suddenly came news to shudder at: the Ionian Sea, after Arrius had arrived there, was not Ionian any longer but “Chionian.”

Critics rightly admire the deft sound patterning that produces a hilarious imitation of Arrius' speaking style: improper placement of *h* is accompanied by the heavy presence of the sibilants *s* and *x*, most notably in emphatic metrical positions, to indicate that his aspirations took the form of an explosive guttural hiss similar to the Greek letter *chi* (Vandiver 1990: 338–39). Hence the untranslatable pun at the end, set up by *horribilis*, “hair-raising” and so “chilling”: the Ionian sea had become *χιόνεος*, “snowy” (E. Harrison 198). It is virtually certain that poem 84 originated as a script for live performance, because these ingenious sound effects cry out for oral delivery. As such, it would have been received as witty political satire.

From Cicero (*Brut.* 242–43) we learn of an orator, Q. Arrius, who seems just the sort of person to invite such a barbed squib. Cicero describes him as the triumvir Crassus' right-hand man (*fuit M. Crassi quasi secundarum*), then gives a capsule account of his rise to prominence:

is omnibus exemplo debet esse quantum in hac urbe polleat multorum oboedire tempori multorumque vel honori vel periculo servire. his enim rebus infimo loco natus et honores et pecuniam et gratiam consecutus etiam in patronorum, sine doctrina, sine ingenio, aliquem numerum pervenerat.

He should be a lesson to all of how much weight it carries in this city to place oneself at the disposal of many and support the candidacies and legal defenses of many. For by those means, although born of humble rank, having obtained political offices and money and goodwill, he became a member of the company of advocates—lack of training and talent notwithstanding.

It was, Cicero finishes up caustically, the restrictions on the length of forensic speeches and relevance to the matter at law imposed by the *lex Pompeia de vi* of 52 B.C.E. that finally put an end to Arrius' legal career.²⁰

Among Catullan scholars we find, for once, a reasonable consensus that the man ridiculed in poem 84 is Crassus' lieutenant.²¹ Good arguments

grounded on evidence both external and internal encourage that conclusion. If Arrius was sent on official business to Syria, as the participle *misso* implies, one fitting occasion is Crassus' departure for the province in November 55; Neudling (10) makes the attractive proposal that he had been appointed Crassus' *legatus*.²² The phrase *requierant omnibus aures* suggests that he was a well-known speaker and so participated regularly in court trials. Finally, the words Catullus singles out as examples of his misuse of aspiration, *commoda* and *insidiae*, are precisely the kinds of terms an orator would bring into play in debate on political or forensic matters (Einarson 188).

Q. Arrius, then, seems a highly suitable target for pasquinade: a great man's follower who, if we may trust Cicero, attained wealth and status beyond his level of capability thanks to officious service, and who was a verbose speaker to boot. In December of 61 B.C.E., furthermore, Arrius was actively involved behind the scenes in preparation for Caesar's consular candidacy in 60 (Cic. *Att.* 1.17.11), and it appears that he may have expected reciprocal help when standing for the same office in the following year (Neudling 8). For all his prior loyalty, however, he failed to receive that support (*Att.* 2.5.2). Cicero remarks that he took the disappointment badly, raging at the office's being "snatched from him": *iam vero Arrius consulatum sibi ereptum fremit*, *Att.* 2.7.3 (April 59 B.C.E.). Baker and Marshall attribute his setback to "a shift in the balance of power within the triumvirate," observing that, as Pompey and Caesar drew closer together and cemented their alliance with the marriage of Caesar's daughter Julia to Pompey in May 59, Crassus was excluded more and more. In the election of 59, the victorious contenders were, accordingly, Caesar's father-in-law L. Calpurnius Piso and Pompey's man A. Gabinius: "Crassus and his candidate were out in the cold" (1975: 227–28). Hence, they subsequently propose, Catullus in caricaturing Arrius' habits of speaking mischievously chooses words familiar to listeners from the disillusioned candidate's complaints of unjust treatment: "The *commoda* on which Arrius' speeches harped will have been his own expectations of *nobilitas* from the consulship of 58 B.C., and the *insidiae* will have been the blighting of those hopes" (1978: 50).

Even if the last suggestion may seem too far-fetched, Q. Arrius is still a textbook case of diligent activity on behalf of a *patronus* meeting with disappointment instead of its proper reward, and therefore an apt illustration of the political double-dealing with which the epigrams, on a symbolic level, are preoccupied. I am not claiming, of course, that Catullus himself sympathizes with Arrius in his frustration, much less takes up his cause. If poem 84, as a performance script, is more entertaining than malicious, it nevertheless shares a good laugh with its audience at Arrius'

expense. As a poem to be read, however, alongside other epigrams in the *libellus*—and to be revisited, once the political preoccupations of the volume as a whole have been identified—it makes its author's point very well. The clandestine maneuverings of leading figures, troped as incest, inevitably require such abandonment of lesser *amici*, despite their years of willing service. Hence Arrius' protest at a consulship snatched away (*ereptum*) is all of a piece with Catullus' fear of Quintius snatching his most treasured possession from him (*eripere ei noli*, 82.3) and his lament that Rufus has already done precisely that (*eripuisti omnia nostra bona . . . eripuisti*, 77.5–6). Betrayal is endemic: in the avowedly political epigrams we will see many other instances of it.

Further Scrollwork

Let us step back now for a quick review of the dominant thematic strains found in the succession of poems 69 through 92 as they might suggest themselves to a contemporary audience in a first sequential reading. Undoubtedly, during that initial encounter not all the nuances that so far have been extracted—some might say “dredged”—from these texts would be apparent to the reader, even a competent Roman reader familiar with events alluded to and prominent personalities mentioned. Still, it is probable that certain overriding impressions would emerge. From the first eleven poems in sequence we receive an almost unbearable sense of compulsion: beginning with 72 (*Dicebas quondam . . .*), Catullus pursues the issue of perfidy experienced from friends and lover alike with single-minded obsession, and the intervening poems, such as 74 on Gellius and his uncle and 78 on uncle Gallus, seem only short distractions from a painful preoccupation to which he returns doggedly. Deployment of the “language of aristocratic commitment” to characterize erotic infidelity, though it might strike a reader as odd, would nevertheless seem justifiable in the immediate vicinity of poems 73 (*Desine de quoquam . . .*) and 77 (*Rufe mihi frustra . . .*), where it is more at home. The revelation of Lesbia's identity in 79, however, should have come as a sharp jolt, a glimpse of historical reality prompting the competent reader to think back and recognize, after the event, the clues to Rufus' identity embedded in poems 69 and 71. From that point on, she would view the whole sequence of Lesbia epigrams from a new, politically oriented standpoint wherein *officium*, *pietas*, and *amicitia* are quite capable of exercising their normal semantic functions.

Poems 80 through 84 should have afforded her a much-needed respite from the theme of duplicity, although in 80 renewed polemic against

Gellius, now graphically obscene, must have provided a hint of further attacks to come. Whether the polymetric *libellus* was already in circulation or not, former listeners who had heard Catullus recite his hendecasyllabic poetry about Juventius would recognize the name and the circumstances of the rebuke in 81 and expect more of the same. Poem 82, the juxtaposed plea to Quintius who appears there for the first time in the whole *liber Catulli*, would on the other hand puzzle them—does the threat involve Juventius or Lesbia?—as would its effort to impart denser significance to what had seemed, even in Catullus' other poetry, an ordinary cliché. The sophisticated frivolity of poem 83 (*Lesbia mi praesente viro . . .*) must have appeared incongruous after so many epigrams focused upon the torments caused by Lesbia's bad faith: clearly this text creates a jarring temporal dislocation, something resembling the abrupt shift to an earlier stage of the myth in a neoteric epyllion. Prior listening audiences would be glad to have a script of the *nobile epigramma* 84, though in its present context, following the distiches on Lesbia, Rufus, and Lesbius, they might well perceive a subtext concerning Arrius' electoral misfortunes lying beneath the spoof of his mispronunciations. This run of poems therefore retards the obsessive thematic movement of the preceding epigrams, though we are not allowed to forget such matters as the *os impurum*, the potential dangers of false friends, Lesbia's disingenuous language, and political chicanery.

Poem 85 returns, finally, to the topic of Catullus' ambivalent emotions, restating it with a crispness and precision, *odi et amo*, that paradoxically implies forthcoming resolution even as it leaves the speaker suspended between two extremities of feeling. Juxtaposition of 86, the comparison between Quintia and Lesbia, affords readers not merely an effective contrast in mood but also a pregnant glimpse of Lesbia in a far different guise, as avatar of neoteric wit, elegance, and charm. This recollection of her other literary role in the Catullan corpus serves, then, to illuminate 87 (*Nulla potest mulier . . .*), which appears retrospectively to tally up the speaker's expenditure of love upon an unworthy object so that he can bluntly cut his losses. Immediately thereafter we find Gellius attacked on new grounds—and if reference to a *patruus* in 88 reminds the reader of his relations with his uncle in 74, while the punchline of the poem brings back the graphic imagery of fellation in 80, the very theme of incest there must inevitably call to mind the relations of Lesbius and Lesbia. Verbal recollection of 79 (*Lesbius est pulcher . . .*) in the first line of poem 89 (*Gellius est tenuis . . .*) would then confirm the suspicion of a thematic bond between Gellius and Lesbius and perhaps suggest, in accordance with the visibility of the consular Gellii, some real-life public connection as well. The fresh emotional fixation manifest in this prolonged denunci-

ation of Gellius is at last explained by 91 (*Non ideo, Gelli . . .*), which aligns him firmly with Lesbia and her perversion of language, with Lesbius' associates in the sphere of political attack and counterattack, and with the climate of aristocratic self-interest and self-indulgence making traditional *amicitia* impossible. If poem 92 (*Lesbia mi dicit . . .*), which shrugs off Lesbia's abusive words as badinage and alleges that the speaker's own complaints are—what? playful dissimulation?—rings hollow after what has passed, it signifies that the argument of the *libellus* has already sunk in: more than halfway through the volume, the baffled reader is no longer sure of whom to believe, least of all Catullus.

Yet she will be left with some still unanswered questions. Given the earlier coupling of Lesbia and Lesbius in 79, should she assume that Quintius and Quintia are likewise brother and sister? If so, are the latter to be regarded as doublets of the former? What part will Juventius play in the epigram collection? What, apart from Lesbia's fortuitous connection with her brother's activities, is the ultimate basis of association between her adulteries and the cutthroat maneuverings in the Roman political arena? To those questions we will turn as we study the remainder of the poems.

Caesar's colores

Catullus 93 has always been regarded by admirers of the poet as a masterpiece of insouciance, if not downright idiocy:

Nil nimium studeo, Caesar, tibi velle placere,
nec scire utrum sis albus an ater homo.

I'm not too intent on wanting to please you, Caesar, nor on knowing the least thing about you.

When Quintilian, for example, is arguing (*Inst.* 11.1.38) that what is honorable freedom of speech for one man is bad form for another, he adduces this poem: *negat se magni facere aliquis poetarum, 'utrum Caesar ater an albus homo sit,' insania; verte, ut idem Caesar de illo dixerit, arrogantia est* ("one of the poets says he doesn't care 'to know the least thing about Caesar'—that's madness; turn it around, so that Caesar has said the same thing about him, and it's conceit"). It is easy to imagine a situation in which the epigram was first declaimed in public: Caesar's protest, itself widely circulated by friends, over the injury done him with the Mamurra epigrams and Catullus' breathtakingly disrespectful rejoinder, accompanied by an offhand shrug. That the poet later apologized for his writings

is irrelevant to appreciation of the distich: it is the original cheeky impulse that delights.

Whatever the circumstances of composition, however—and that fictive scenario will suit as well as any—a more pressing question arises. In view of the fact that Catullus' apology has presumably been tendered and accepted, what is poem 93 now doing in the elegiac *libellus*? Let us assume that annoying Caesar is no longer its main objective: does this distich serve any further semiotic purpose, especially in its present position? Or, to approach the problem from another angle, is there any other way in which it can be understood to make a contribution to a sequential reading? There are, I think, two respects in which it marks a departure from the previous content of the volume. Setting aside 85, whose terseness is owed to its obvious function as a summary pronouncement, 93 leads off a series of five unitary monodistiches, all polemic, found in the remainder of the poems (the others are 94, 105, 106, and 112).²³ Furthermore, it is also the first of nine epigrams in which Catullus appeals to popular wisdom, chiefly in the form of proverbs and folk sayings, to back up his judgments or assertions. While proverbs are used by many other authors, often to give a quick salty or colloquial touch to otherwise formal speech, it is interesting that those employed by Catullus are clustered within the epigram collection and, like the monodistiches, appear almost exclusively in its second half.²⁴ Thus it will repay us to explore briefly the operations of the independent couplet as a political weapon in the hope of discovering the likely effect produced by the sudden appearance of several of these in the elegiac *libellus*. After that, we will ascertain the implications of the proverbial expressions in poem 93 and its companion text 94. This analysis should make it clear that in this concluding half of the epigram collection the monodistich performs both a structural and a thematic task, while the incorporation of proverbial expressions lends additional thematic weight.

The barbed couplet was a ready and valuable counter of political exchange in the late republican period, if we can judge by testimonia concerning specimens of the genre ascribed to Catullus' friend Calvus. When the biographer Suetonius (*Iul.* 49) turns to the scandalous gossip surrounding Caesar's youthful association with Nicomedes, king of Bithynia, he begins with an amusing praeteritio: *omitto Calvi Licini notissimos versus: "Bithynia quicquid et / pedicator Caesaris umquam habuit"* ("I pass over the highly notorious lines of Licinius Calvus, 'whatever Bithynia and Caesar's boyfriend at any time possessed'). The verses are not worth comment, in Suetonius' opinion, but due to their fame must nevertheless be quoted. He subsequently adds that Calvus too arrived at a reconciliation with Caesar despite his nefarious lampoons, *post famosa epigrammata* (ibid., 73). It is

arguable that the above passage, though in antiquity well-known in itself, is an extract from a longer epigram; but another of Calvus' fragments (18 Courtney) is quite patently a monodistich:

Magnus, quem metuunt omnes, digito caput uno
scalpit; quid credas hunc sibi velle? virum.

The Great Man, whom all fear, scratches his head with one finger; what do you suppose this man wants? a man.

Using a single finger to scratch, so as not to disturb the arrangement of the hair, is a time-honored topos for imputing effeminacy. Here the accusation, with opportune economy, also mocks Pompey's attempt (in portrait statues, at least) to style his hair in the manner of Lysippus' iconic likeness of Alexander the Great.²⁵ In the course of anecdotal reminiscences about Calvus' physical appearance and conduct (*Cont.* 7.4.7), the elder Seneca quotes all but the first four words; he must have found them mentioned in his source, no doubt a biographical sketch by a contemporary.²⁶ Elsewhere he recalls Porcius Latro alluding to them as an instance of the scurrility directed at leaders in times of unrest (10.1.8). Plutarch goes further, describing the verses being used in a street demonstration against Pompey in 56 B.C.E. by Clodius and his supporters:²⁷

τέλος δέ, προελθόντος αὐτοῦ [Πομπηίου] πρὸς τινα δίκην, ἔχων ὑφ' αὐτῷ πλῆθος ἀνθρώπων ἀσελγείας καὶ ὀλιγωρίας μεστὸν αὐτὸς μὲν εἰς ἐπιφανῇ τόπον καταστάς ἐρωτήματα τοιαῦτα προὔβαλλε: 'Τίς ἐστὶν αὐτοκράτωρ ἀκόλαστος; τίς ἀνὴρ ἄνδρα ζητεῖ; τίς ἐνὶ δακτύλῳ κνᾷται τὴν κεφαλὴν;' οἱ δέ, ὥσπερ χορὸς εἰς ἀμοιβαῖα συγκεκροτημένος, ἐκείνου τὴν τήβεννον ἀνασεύοντος ἐφ' ἐκάστῳ μέγα βοῶντες ἀπεκρίναντο: 'Πομπηίος.'

Finally, when Pompey appeared in court, Clodius, accompanied by a troop of men full of violence and disrespect, after taking his stand in a conspicuous place, put forth questions such as these: "Who is a dissolute commander? What man is looking for a man? Who scratches his head with one finger?" The others, just like a chorus drilled in response, while he flapped his toga replied to each question in a great shout: "Pompey!"

In the manner of a Jay Leno one-liner, the monodistich encapsulates in easily memorable form a satiric comment, which may then be circulated orally, posted as an anonymous graffito, or, as here, converted into a slogan. Its

intimate connection with the political arena should be self-evident: to judge from surviving examples, it is the preferred mode of topical commentary, both educated and popular. With the exception, again, of poem 85, Catullus' couplets are identical in makeup to this one of Calvus': each propounds a generalization in the hexameter that will be corroborated or contradicted by a sting enclosed within the final hemistich of the pentameter line. A Roman reader confronting a run of such epigrams, therefore, might automatically infer that they were political in their bent, whether or not she knew the parties mentioned, and also that political issues would be a major concern of the adjacent poems as well. Meanwhile, the arrangement of the couplets—two pairs of thematically related texts (93 and 94, 105 and 106) followed by a single distich (112), located at decreasing intervals—conveys a sense of forward movement and, like the progressive series 88–91, of growing urgency.

In addition to the air of certainty imparted by the lapidary precision of these monodistiches, four out of the five cast their cutting remark at the end in the form of a gnomic utterance. In 93 the concluding platitude *non scire utrum albus an ater sit*—literally “not to know whether X is swarthy or pale”—means that the person would not be recognized at sight and is accordingly used by orators to claim total unfamiliarity with an individual.²⁸ Hence Caesar is being dismissed by a junior member of the provincial élite from the very province he governs, who indicates his complete indifference to his addressee by proclaiming that he has no idea of Caesar's appearance and no desire to become familiar with it through face-to-face contact or honorific representations.²⁹ Recourse to common-places implies that a speaker shares the attitudes of the community as a whole. By couching his assertion in this way, Catullus insinuates that Transpadane Gaul joins him in writing off Caesar's visibility.

The next epigram, 93, also terminates in a maxim and in fact draws the proverbial character of the statement to a reader's attention:

Mentula moechatur. moechatur mentula? certe
hoc est quod dicunt: ipsa olera olla legit.

Mentula fools around. Does a tool fool around? Surely this is an example of the saying “the pot itself gathers pot-herbs.”

The distich might be termed “enclitic”; although it is quite understandable on its own, its full import is best realized in conjunction with the one immediately preceding it. While poem 93 was aimed at Caesar, 94 targets his creature. In 29 and 57 Catullus had attacked Mamurra under his real name and received a rebuke from his protector. Now the poet announces

a shift in tactics: his victim will be pilloried under the thinly disguised pseudonym "Mentula," a reference to the phrase *diffututa mentula* applied to him at 29.13, which may have already become a byword (Thomson 1997: 280). To forestall possible objections to this appellation, the speaker introduces a pseudo-argument: insofar as the function gives a name to the object, the bond of signifier and signified is inseparable. The folk etymology deriving *olla*, "jar," from *olera*, "vegetables" (cf. Varr. *LL* 5.108, *ab olla olera dicta*)³⁰ is underscored through a double elision that links the two words together metrically and reinforces their orthographical similarity.

Thus in 93 and 94 Catullus appeals to public opinion in order to lend weight to his testimony. These appeals are a tool of self-characterization, that *ethopoeia* of which the poet was a master (Selden 1992: 493). Because *sententiae* possess the force of traditional wisdom, Quintilian (*Inst.* 8.5.8) warns prospective orators that they must be used sparingly and with discretion and should be appropriate to both situation and speaker. Employment of apothegms and proverbial remarks is more suitable for leading figures:

magis enim decet eos, in quibus est auctoritas, ut rei pondus etiam persona confirmet. quis enim ferat puerum aut adolescentulum aut etiam ignobilem, si iudicet in dicendo et quodammodo praecipiat?

It is more becoming to those who have influence, so that their actual public image strengthens the force of their opinion. For who would put up with a boy or a youth, or even an ordinary fellow, if he were to be judgmental in speaking and, as it were, to pontificate?

Throughout his oeuvre, Catullus affects to speak from a position of authority warranted by superior knowledge. Surveying characteristic strategies used to close his poems, Peden observes a marked tendency toward generalizing remarks: "Catullus evidently likes using the end of a poem as an occasion on which to demonstrate that the poem's theme has worth as an *exemplum* for philosophic reflection, and he is not afraid to pass strong judgement which derives its strength partly from its conventionality" (98). When pronouncing upon the merits of a girl or a line of verse, especially in the polymetrics, the speaker invokes the criteria of the social élite. In this final section of the elegiac *libellus*, however, his concerns are chiefly political rather than aesthetic; and so, adopting the stance of an adherent of the *mos maiorum*, he repeatedly calls upon popular judgment (*populi arbitrio*, 108.1) or quotes maxims to bolster his claims. As such received sayings accumulate, they give the impression that he now seeks validation from the community at large, rather than a

select few. Since the gnomic utterance is a stock closural device,³¹ frequent invocations of conventional wisdom also signal that the book is coming to an end.³²

Time and Remembrance

Immediately after introducing the theme of political corruption, however, Catullus speaks for one last time as a member of an artistic circle and affirms the value of major productions by neoteric colleagues. In poem 95, he greets the arrival of Cinna's recondite epyllion, the *Zmyrna*, with his old Callimachean fervor; in 96 he assures Calvus, albeit in a guarded conditional statement, that Calvus' dead beloved Quintilia may draw consolation from his deferred confession of love and grief. These adjoining poems to friends offset the previous two distiches involving Caesar and Mamurra; we consequently learn that, in a reprise of the pattern employed in the Veronese cycle, the juxtaposition of two thematically related poems will serve as another means of structuring the succession of epigrams at the conclusion of the *libellus*. As a corollary, we discover that during a sequential reading such juxtaposed short poems produce striking gaps in meaning, both in and of themselves and in terms of what precedes or follows.

Like his sketch of Q. Arrius, Catullus' congratulatory epigram to Cinna fully meets the standards of excellence laid down in poem 86; its *mica salis* has the savor of not only Hellenistic erudition but Attic wit as well:

Zmyrna mei Cinnae nonam post denique messem
 quam coepta est nonamque edita post hiemem,
 milia cum interea quingenta Hatriensis³³ in uno

.

Zmyrna cavas Satrachi penitus mittetur ad undas,
Zymnam cana diu saecula pervoluent.
 at Volusi annales Paduam morientur ad ipsam
 et laxas scombris saepe dabunt tunicas.
 parva mei mihi sint cordi monimenta <sodalis>³⁴
 at populus tumido gaudeat Antimacho.

The *Zmyrna* of my Cinna is at last brought forth, nine harvests and nine winters after it was conceived, while meantime the man of Hatria [has produced] fifty thousand in one [year?]. . . . The *Zmyrna* will be sent far off to the hollow waves of the Satrachus; white-haired generations will

long unroll the *Zmyrna*. But Volusius' *Annales* will die no farther afield than the Po itself and frequently furnish loose wrappings for mackerel. Though small, let the achievements of my <colleague> be dear to me; let the crowd rejoice in its overblown Antimachus.

Clausen (1972 [1964]: 189) believes that polemic verses in the Callimachean style ought to illustrate, first and foremost, how such verse should be composed, and his reading of the poem demonstrates that intent. In 95, the elegant formal balance displayed in the couplets contrasting first the productivity of Cinna and Volusius and then the fates of their respective poems is enhanced by a sophisticated reference to the ending of Callimachus' own *Hymn to Apollo*. There the god had sent the malicious detractor Envy (*Φθόνος*) packing with an influential comparison between the great but turbid "Assyrian river," the Euphrates, and the "scant stream, pure and undefiled, from a holy spring" whence priestesses draw water for Demeter's temple (108–12). In Catullus' variation, Volusius' native Po, slow-moving and muddy, becomes the equivalent of the Euphrates, while the distant Satrachus, featured in Cinna's epyllion, takes the place of Callimachus' untainted rivulet.³⁵ As if that allusion were not barbed enough, the poet caps it with another citation of even more recondite material probably contained in a lost Hellenistic aetiological work. The Satrachus was apparently the site of an immersion ritual involving a cult statue of Adonis, the son of Cinna's heroine. After being bathed in the river, the statue was wrapped in a blanket or coverlet.³⁶ Volusius' poem, once arrived at Padua, will furnish abundant (*saepe*) sheets of papyrus for cooking fish *en papillote*.³⁷ Myth overlaps with tongue-in-cheek prophecy here, since "both Adonis and the mackerels are given special covers or garments after they come out of the river" (Noonan 1986: 302).

As comically irreverent as the analogy is, it nevertheless makes a serious point. Cinna's *Zmyrna* is aligned with the awesome timelessness of sacred ritual repeated year after year and Volusius' *Annales* with the mundane chores of daily life, with the papyrus wrapper destroyed in the process of cooking fish. Nine years of labor invested in the composition of this epyllion, brief though it may be, are rewarded by the capacity to rise above the limits of space and time, while slapdash composition can produce only huge quantities of throwaway verse. Art, as it were, must be concentrated, distilled down to its very essence, if it is to realize its potential for transcendence. Even the popularity of a prolific author such as Antimachus works to his discredit,³⁸ since a lengthy composition appealing to mass taste cannot establish the personal rapport between text and individual reader (underscored by the combination *mei mihi* in line 9)

that will permit it to survive *plus uno . . . saeclo* (1.10). Audiences appreciative of the polymetric *nugae* will respond with gratitude to this firm reaffirmation of Callimachean doctrine, despite the fact that, like poem 86 on Quintia, it seems rather out of place within its immediate context.³⁹

Although it also testifies to the literary accomplishments of a friend, poem 96 is quite distinct in mood from 95:

Si quicquam mutis gratum acceptumve sepulcris
 accidere a nostro, Calve, dolore potest,
 quo desiderio veteres renovamus amores
 atque olim missas flemus amicitias,
 certe non tanto mors immatura dolori est
 Quintiliae, quantum gaudet amore tuo.

If anything pleasing or welcome can befall the silent dead, Calvus, as a result of our anguish—that anguish by which, through longing, we requicken old loves and weep for friendships once abandoned—surely Quintilia does not grieve for her untimely death as much as she rejoices in your love.

When Propertius (2.34.89–90) lists Calvus as a major predecessor in the genre of erotic elegy, his specific contribution is described as a dirge for “wretched Quintilia”: *haec etiam docti confessa est pagina Calvi / cum caneret miserae funera Quintiliae*. In 1956 Eduard Fraenkel proposed a reading of the present Catullan epigram that, although disputed in some details by later critics, has nevertheless become a widely accepted interpretation of the poem. Quintilia was Calvus’ former wife, and *olim . . . missas* at 96.4 indicates that he had rejected her to pursue other amours.⁴⁰ Her unexpected death inspired an elegiac lament in which she reproached him for injuring her, predicting his remorse *cum iam fulva cinis fuero* (“when soon I shall be yellow ash,” fr. 15 Courtney). In another surviving line, *forsitan hoc etiam gaudeat ipsa cinis* (fr. 16), Calvus voices hope that her ashes might derive some pleasure from his tardy expression of regret.⁴¹ Catullus in reply picks up that pentameter, substituting a firm *certe* for its tentative *forsitan* and employing the same verb, *gaudere*, in the present indicative, in order to reassure his friend that Quintilia is indeed made happy by knowing of his affection for her and is thereby consoled for her own misfortune.

If we continue Fraenkel’s line of argument, then, the epigram seems to assert that poetry has the power to atone for previous transgressions on the part of its composer and so to undo the past. We should nevertheless observe that the assertion is made conditionally—“if the mute dead can

benefit from the grief of the living.” Poem 96 is one of a series of six epigrams—the others being 71, 76, 102, 107, and 108—in which the essential soundness of a controlling generalization, factual or philosophical, rests upon the legitimacy of the opening premise on which it depends. In the most unforgettable of the series, poem 76, the protasis, as we know, turns out to be wholly invalid.⁴² At the moment of reading, the question posed in the first distich of 96 seems unanswerable, permitting Catullus’ carefully hedged statement to hold out some nebulous promise to its addressee. But, in drawing attention to the silence of the tomb (*mutis . . . sepulcris*) at its very beginning, this text anticipates poem 101, where the speaker will address the silent ashes in vain (*ut . . . mutam nequiquam alloquerer cinerem*, 3–4). After coming upon the poet’s own farewell to his brother, readers must understand that Calvus’ sorrowful verses, however poignant and tender they seem to the living, will have no effect upon the dead—and that Catullus and Calvus, too, in their capacity as poets are fully aware of this. Once more art proves unable to sublimate reality; its comforting illusions founder upon the fact of death.

It is nevertheless important to observe that the combination of these two artistic statements, so different in tone and so contradictory in their stance toward time and mortality, produces its own set of meanings when they are taken together. Each poem is related to the other because of their mutual preoccupation with the capacity of the written word to access audiences, intended or not. Cinna’s *Zmyrna* will delight intellectuals in distant locales for generations but fail to impress a populace addicted to Antimachus. Calvus’ poem strongly moves living readers; it is left uncertain whether his verses will reach the dead woman to whom they matter most. Despite such failures of communication, both poems create an intense final impression of the ties of friendship and collegiality attaching Catullus to each writer: in 95, the speaker’s enthusiasm is prompted as much by his friend as by his friend’s production, and in 96 the words *amor* and *amicitia*, elsewhere used together only to describe the poet’s complex love for Lesbia, are applied, as a token of esteem, to Calvus’ relationship (J. T. Davis 301). Bonds of creative rapport forged by the neoteric poetic project still hold firm even when language itself fails.

When the Kissing Had to Stop

After the ebullient wit of the manifesto on Cinna’s *Zmyrna* and the pensive sympathy of the complementary address to Calvus, there follows what critics without exception agree to be the most foul and scatological invective in the corpus. This fact in itself might convince some observers

that the *liber Catulli* is the “unkempt chaos” Bernhard Schmidt pronounced it. Yet, despite the rupture in mood between poems 96 and 97 and the equally arresting shift of tone between 98 and 99, we can trace out continuity in these three poems, for they exhibit a kind of closural sequencing. The epigrams positioned immediately before 99, though apparently poles apart thematically, nevertheless anticipate it and thereby prepare the reader for the finality of its last pronouncement. In conjunction, too, these poems recapitulate an earlier moment in the volume, for they reawaken the tension between provincial Verona and Rome sketched out earlier in poems 67 and 68.

Poem 97 is not, of course, mere nastiness wallowed in for its own sake. Its artistry has long been recognized: obscenity is made concrete in “a series of images the execution of which is as brilliant as their merciless fantasy is breathtaking” (Quinn 1971 [1959]: 36):

Non, ita me di ament, quicquam referre putavi
 utrum os an culum olfacerem Aemilio.
 nilo mundius hoc, nihiloque immundior ille est
 verum etiam culus mundior et melior;
 nam sine dentibus est. hoc dentis sesquipedalis,
 gingivas vero ploxeni habet veteris;
 praeterea rictum, qualem diffissus in aestu
 meientis mulae cunnus habere solet.
 hic futuit multas et se facit esse venustum;
 et non pistrino traditur atque asino?
 quem siqua attingit, non illam posse putemus
 aegroti culum lingere carnificis?

Gods love me, I didn't think it mattered whether I smelled Aemilius' mouth or his asshole. The one isn't any more clean, the other more unclean—though actually his asshole is cleaner and better, for it has no teeth. The other has eighteen-inch teeth, and the gums of an old muck-basket, and, besides that, a slit like the splayed-out cunt of a pissing mule in heat.⁴³ This fellow has fucked lots of women and makes himself out to be charming, and he isn't delivered over to the millstone and its donkey? If anyone touches him, shouldn't we think her capable of licking the asshole of a hangman with diarrhea?

Aemilius' mouth, with its long dirty teeth and filthy gums, resembles a *ploxenum*. The word, found only once in Latin literature, comes from northern Italy (*Catullus* “*ploxenum*” *circa Padum invenit*, Quint. Inst. 1.5.8) and is defined (Fest. 260 Lindsay) as a wagon-bed (*capsus*) or chest

(*capsa*) set in a light cart (*in cisio*). Whatmough brilliantly deduced that *ploxenum* refers to a manure cart with its wicker container employed in the Cisalpine region: “as the basket was worn by use, the broken withies stuck out as much as half a yard, and the mouth, gums, and teeth of Aemilius, foul and diseased, reminded Catullus, he says, of a much used *cratis stercorearia*” (49). As for the mule, it would have been harnessed to that cart: mules were the standard draft animals of antiquity (Var. R. 2.8.5), and female mules, not males, were preferred for hauling purposes (Adams 1993: 40–45). Olfactory sense-impressions evoked by the imagery are cumulative: first the fetid stench of dung and then, on top of it, the pungent ammoniac reek of estrus-discharge as the animal pauses to advertise itself, the whole mélange of smells intensified by the warmth of the summer season.⁴⁴

The unsavory sexual overtones of the image lead Catullus, by an obvious progression of thought, to Aemilius’ own pretensions to gallantry. Because the nauseating task of driving the cart would naturally be assigned to a slave, he arrives at a suitable punishment for the man: set him working at another dreary slave’s job, that of urging on the donkey turning a millstone. Meanwhile, the she-mule’s shameless demonstration of accessibility, all the more uncalled-for in a beast unable to produce offspring, has anticipated that of Aemilius’ willing partner, who must be deemed capable of any act whatsoever, no matter how degrading. The final line is a strained, purposely over-the-top indicator of what might be expected from her. As the pointed use of a north Italian dialect expression indicates, Catullus has again assumed his familiar stage persona of Veronese outsider: here he speaks as veteran country-dweller, painting Aemilius’ metaphoric rusticity in terms that make the farmstead uncomfortably present to urban sophisticates.⁴⁵ Poem 97 is best interpreted, then, as a comic monologue designed for recitation, which incites laughter by arousing listeners’ anticipation of the graphic outrageousness of the speaker’s successive pronouncements—each more disgusting than the last.

The next poem extends this invective trajectory, for its target, a certain Victus (if that is the correct reading, since the name is otherwise unattested in republican Rome) is also denounced for rank breath:⁴⁶

In te, si in quemquam, dici pote, putide Victi,
 id quod verbosis dicitur et fatuis.
 ista cum lingua, si usus veniat tibi, possis
 culos et crepidas lingere carpatinas.
 si nos omnino vis omnes perdere, Victi,
 hiscas: omnino quod cupis efficies.

Against you, if against anyone, filthy Victius, can be said that which is said to the wordy and tedious: with that tongue of yours, if need be, you could lick assholes and barnyard sandals. If you wish to ruin us all utterly, Victius, gape: you'll accomplish utterly what you desire.

Lines 3–4 repeat the phrase *culum lingere*, duplicate the allegation of using one's tongue to perform the foulest possible tasks, and—by specifying that the sandals in question are *carpatinas*, those worn by shepherds and farm-workers⁴⁷—sustain the metonymic association, introduced in 97, between halitosis and rusticity. This time, though, the speaker does not pass a judgment solely on his own authority but instead throws the weight of popular opinion behind it: with *dici potest* and *dicitur* he ascribes proverbial status to his remark.⁴⁸ Victius' dirty mouth is thus a concrete metaphor for the morally disgusting quality of his speech, which sickens the community exposed to it (Syndikus 1987: 97).

The lexical and thematic link between the two epigrams is self-evident. Though the exact historical connection she draws seems a feeble one, Forsyth may be right in maintaining that political circumstances explain their proximity to one another—however, the real topical implications are probably no longer recoverable.⁴⁹ She is on firmer ground in finding a “meaningful juxtaposition” of 97, 98, and 99, the common element being the *os impurum*:

Surripui tibi, dum ludis, mellite Iuventi,
 saviolum dulci dulcius ambrosia.
 verum id non impune tuli: nam amplius horam
 suffixum in summa me memini esse cruce,
 dum tibi me purgo nec possum fletibus ullis
 tantillum vestrae demere saevitiae.
 nam simul id factum est, multis diluta labella
 guttis abstersti mollibus articulis,
 ne quicquam nostro contractum ex ore maneret,
 tamquam commictae spurca saliva lupae.
 praeterea infesto miserum me tradere amori
 non cessasti omnique excruciare modo,
 ut mi ex ambrosia mutatum iam foret illud
 saviolum tristi tristius elleboro.
 quam quoniam poenam misero proponis amori,
 numquam iam posthac basia surripiam.

I stole from you, while you were teasing, honeyed Juventius, a little kiss (*saviolum*) sweeter than sweet ambrosia. But it did not go unpunished: for

more than an hour, I recall, I hung pegged at the top of a cross while I excused myself to you and was unable for all my weeping to mollify your rage even in the slightest. For, as soon as the deed was done, you scrubbed your lips, wet with many tears, with your dainty fingers, lest any infectious trace from my mouth remain, as though it were the dirty spit of a polluted whore, and you didn't stop betraying me to hostile love and crucifying me in every way, until that little kiss of mine instead of ambrosia became more bitter than bitter hellebore. Since you hold out that penalty for unrequited love, never from now on will I steal "kisses" (*basia*).

With "a kind of poetic justice" (1979: 406), Forsyth remarks, Juventius now shrinks from the speaker's kiss as though Catullus himself were guilty of the offense he had imputed to others. Thus the sequence culminates in an unexpectedly ironic reversal of the invective topos. But explication should not stop there: thematic repetition and variation in the three epigrams is, I believe, merely the logistical framework upon which a complicated literary proclamation is constructed.

Poem 99 is experimental in form. As Ross (1969: 24, 105) observes, it attempts, like poem 86, to superimpose the specialized vocabulary and playful tone of the polymetric love poems upon the *gravitas* of traditional Roman epigram. The artificiality of the situation seems to look back to a Hellenistic prototype, though no exact model can be identified; a vaguely reminiscent analogue is AP 12.124, from a Meleagrian sequence, where a lover snatches a kiss on the sly (λάθριος), is visited by the boy in a dream, and then feels unpleasant burning sensations, as though he had touched "a swarm of bees, a thistle, and fire."⁵⁰ Closer still in substance, although post-Neronian in date, is AP 5.29, by Cillactor:

Ἄδὺ τὸ βινεῖν ἐστὶ· τίς οὐ λέγει; ἀλλ' ὅταν αἰτῇ
χαλκόν, πικρότερον γίνεται ἔλλαβόρου.

Screwing is sweet. Who denies that? But when it asks for money it becomes more bitter than hellebore.

The priamel formula "X is sweet" is a stock opening trope in Hellenistic poetry, and the first hemistich of Cillactor's epigram travesties Nossis' gnomic ἄδιον οὐδὲν ἔρωτος ("nothing is sweeter than love," AP 5.170.1).⁵¹ The rest of the couplet may therefore burlesque a lost Greek exemplar in which the hellebore comparison was used. If so, Catullus has expanded its applicability, for in the economy of his own poem hellebore does double duty. Proverbially, the drug was considered a remedy for

insanity, and in the last couplet the ex-lover speaks as though psychologically “cured” of his infatuation.⁵²

Whatever its antecedents, Catullus’ poem is remarkable for its patchwork of expressions drawn from other passages in the corpus, most notably the amatory poems. The speaker filched (*surripui*, 1) a kiss from Juventius even as Lesbia has filched the charms of other women (*surripuit*, 86.6). The boy plays (*ludis*), just as she does when making her polymetric debut in 2.2, and his teasing of Catullus is parallel to her teasing of the sparrow. *Mellitus* is Catullus’ epithet for Juventius’ eyes in 48.1, but it is also the word applied to Lesbia’s pet bird at 3.6, *nam mellitus erat*. In an epigram marked as the product of a neoteric poetics, these reminiscences bring the two beloved objects of Catullus’ love poetry together in a context related to the opening of the *Passer*-book and also couple 99 with 86 as paired literary manifestos. Yet, in contrast to the preciousity of the initial distich, the prosaic *verum id non impune tuli* in line 3 repeats a threat to a real possessor of the *os impurum* at 78b.3, *verum id non impune feres*. The perceived incongruity of this recollected passage is counteracted by an even stronger echo of the same poem in the tenth line, *commictae spurca saliva lupae* (= *purae pura puellae / savia comminxit spurca saliva tua*, 78b.1–2), as if to assure readers that the cross-reference is no accident. Crucifixion metaphors in lines 4 (*suffixum in summa . . . cruce*) and 12 (*excruciare*) cannot help but evoke the definitive treatment of that image in poem 85. Finally, *basia* in line 16 looks back to the *basia* and *basiationes* given to Lesbia (5.7 and 13, 7.1 and 9) and the act of kissing, *basiare*, performed upon Lesbia at 7.9 and Juventius at 48.2 and 3.

What are we to make of this tissue of self-allusivity? One clue seems to be provided by *me memini* in line 2. In terms of plot-line, the phrase puts the actual incident described into the remoter past: Catullus recollects what happened on a previous occasion and refuses to take the bait again (Richardson 1963: 95). As an allusive expedient, however, fictive remembrance of an earlier narrative moment can recall a prior phase of the tradition,⁵³ or, in this instance, might gesture toward another of the author’s compositions on a like theme. Admittedly, the *liber Catulli* contains no other poem dealing with *stolen* kisses. But the emphatic substitution of *basia* for *saviolum* at the poem’s close might well be a reminiscence of the *basia*-poems 5, 7, and 48 as a collective group.

Basium is a word Catullus had made his own. Whether or not he himself introduced it into Latin, as Fordyce (107) hypothesized, it is Celtic in origin and therefore must have given a distinctively regional flavor to his love-poems, enhancing his authorial self-presentation as a “Transpadanus.”⁵⁴ That audiences specifically associated *basium* and its derivatives with

Catullus' unique poetic voice may be indicated by two other passages in which the word appears to be deployed for sarcastic effect, as though put within quotation marks. Taking leave of Lesbia in 8, the speaker asks whom she will now "kiss" (*basiabis*, 18); he then protests in 16 that Furius and Aurelius have drawn the wrong conclusions about his private life from reading about "many thousands of 'kisses'" (*milia multa basiorum*, 12). Thus *basium* as used at 99.16 stands an equally good chance of being metapoetic. After so painful a tale of rejection, it seems odd that the speaker does not say "I will steal no more kisses *from you*." Instead, he renounces the act categorically, a blanket dismissal inviting the suspicion that, on another level of meaning, he has relinquished "kiss"-poetry as a generic subject.⁵⁵

Once poem 99 is construed as a self-referential comment, its other instances of poetic cross-reference fall into place. Found here, the trope of crucifixion that makes a startling, almost literal impact in 85 is trivialized and reduced to its former status as trite erotic hyperbole. The poem also brings into conjunction two opposed thematic motifs—the conceit of the thwarted kiss, a staple of light Hellenistic epigram, and the invective metaphor of the *os impurum*. The focus of each is the mouth, which, being a site of purity and contamination alike, is, according to Fitzgerald, "a particularly rich source of figuration for poetry and especially for a poetry such as Catullus' that is so concerned with the relations and positions implied by the poetic act" (63). By an easy metonymic turn, as we have already seen, mouths become a figure for the abstract idea of speech, good or bad. It is arguable, then, that in 99 the erstwhile "purity" of Catullus' neoteric pronouncements has been contaminated by the filthiness of the surrounding public discourse, as seen in the juxtaposed encounters with Aemilius and Victius. His Transpadane origins, alluded to in all three poems, position him at one remove from the bad speech of these men, but his own distinguishing vernacular inflections have been tainted nonetheless. The only recourse at this point is silence. Thus we will hear no more of Juventius and find no further attempts to import the language of the polymetrics into elegiac epigram.

Coups de grâce

The poetic sequence 97 through 99 inaugurates a series of closures imposed upon Catullan thematic material. Closure, according to Barbara Herrnstein Smith's influential description, takes place when the last section of a poem (or, by analogy, a larger literary work) produces the feeling of having arrived at a suitable stopping-place: "it reinforces the feeling of finality, completion, and composure which we value in all works of art; and it gives ultimate unity

and coherence to the reader's experience of the poem by providing a point from which all the preceding elements may be viewed comprehensively and their relations grasped as part of a significant design" (36). Thus a satisfying closure is one essential component of a properly structured book.

Contemporary literary theory, however, rejects Smith's New Critical concept of the work of art as holistic entity with all details organically integrated into the total package of meaning. Even highly polished poems inevitably contain loose ends, elements that, by resisting the controlling pattern, frustrate the reader's attempt to make sense of the whole.⁵⁶ A *libellus* composed of many disparate or only tangentially related texts should therefore seem even more untidy as regards single features: although governing designs may be traced, some secondary motifs will still appear extraneous. Corollary to the problem of the superfluous detail is that of the ending: not all closings achieve closure. Smith herself recognizes that endings perceived as "weak"—a less judgmental term is "open"—are also meaningful statements, asserting their own irresolution and forcing the reader to share in it.⁵⁷ Open endings are therefore the moral and epistemological reversals of epigrammatic conclusions, since epigram as a genre tends to drive home its point unequivocally—as we have already seen Catullan epigrams do.

The last Gellius poem supplies a "weak" ending to the collection insofar as it promises to take a vengeance upon its addressee that, by its very position, it cannot deliver. In effect, though, 116 is merely a coda, for previous epigrams have already accomplished its task of finishing off the whole. In 99, the first of these, Catullus bids farewell to Juventius and, along with him, to those tender, playful *versiculi* defined in poem 16 as a leading feature of his body of creative work. In successive epigrams, he relinquishes his artistic preoccupations with his brother, with Lesbia, with the Roman political scene, and finally with the epitome of political malfeasance, his arch-nemesis Mamurra. These authorial valedictories constitute a progressive surrender of his art, piece by piece.

Let us consider the manner in which Catullus takes leave of his two most important objects of affection, his brother and Lesbia. Poems 100 and 101 continue the train of thought begun in 99. In the first of these, the speaker mulls over the situation of two Veronese acquaintances enamored of a pair of siblings:

Caelius Aufillenum et Quintius Aufillenam
 flos Veronensum depereunt iuvenum,
 hic fratrem, ille sororem. hoc est, quod dicitur, illud
 fraternum vere dulce sodalicium.
 cui faveam potius? Caeli, tibi: nam tua nobis

perspecta est igni tum⁵⁸ unica amicitia,
 cum vesana meas torreret flamma medullas.
 sis felix, Caeli, sis in amore potens.

The cream of Veronese youth are madly in love, Caelius for Aufillenus, Quintius for Aufillena, the former for the brother, the latter for the sister. This proves that old saying, “sibling association is *truly sweet*.” Which of the two should I back? You, Caelius, for your exclusive friendship for me was tried by fire at the time when an insane passion was scorching my marrow. Be lucky, Caelius, be successful in love.

Three of the players in this strange foursome turn up elsewhere in the *liber Catulli*: Caelius in poem 58, Quintius in 82, Aufillena in 110 and 111. Each reappears under circumstances that arouse unsatisfied curiosity. Scholarship has consequently focused on determining the identities of these individuals and establishing their relationship to one another and to Catullus. The first question raised is whether the “Caelius” of this poem can legitimately be coupled with the “Caelius” of 58 and, if so, whether both can then be identified with the “Rufus” of 69, 71, and 77, M. Caelius Rufus. While the latter association seems tempting, few scholars go that far; the *communis opinio* favors answering “yes” to the first part of the question but a firm “no” to the second.⁵⁹ Meanwhile, Aufillena’s later appearances in which she is denounced as a double-dealing sexual hypocrite and incestuous matron invite conjecture that Quintius is the husband she allegedly cuckolds and that Catullus is exacting vengeance for Quintius’ attempt to steal Lesbia in poem 82 (Forsyth 1980–81). That inference, however, appears contrived and extrapolates rashly from textual data. From the information given in poem 100 we can draw only three conclusions: first, the speaker must be envisioned in Verona, as he was in 65 and 68a–b; second, the subjects of this poem—Caelius, Quintius, and the two Aufilleni—are also at home there; third, the affair with Lesbia has been consigned to the past, as *cum . . . torreret* indicates.⁶⁰

We may have more success in grasping the point of the epigram if we begin by examining its vocabulary. It has not been observed that this is yet another instance of linguistically mapping topical political concerns onto an erotic scenario. Here the model involved is that of a magisterial election and the corresponding ethics of favoring a given candidate. At first glance, the concept of a *fraternum . . . sodalicium* seems restricted to the private sphere, and in fact to a quasi-familial relationship.⁶¹ Political strife at Rome in the mid-50s B.C.E. ensured, however, that audiences coming across the noun *sodalicium* would have first thought of a more sinister meaning of the word, “a gang organized to influence elections” (*OLD*

1b).⁶² On February 10 of 56, the senate had issued a decree disbanding electioneering organizations (*sodalitates*) and outlawing groups internally divided into ten-man squads (*decuriati*) to facilitate campaigning (Cic. *QFr.* 2.3.5). The next year the *lex Licinia de sodaliciis* was passed in a further effort to prevent office-seekers from employing illegally organized teams of supporters to advance their interests.⁶³ Following the elections, corruption at once became an issue. In 54, Cn. Plancius, a victorious candidate for aedile, was prosecuted under the *lex Licinia* by his defeated opponent M. Iuventus Laterensis, with Cicero successfully defending.

Ideologically, Roman electoral procedures were structured around the supposedly disinterested gift of votes and endorsements by *clientes* and *amici* of the candidate, creating a corresponding obligation on his part to repay such freely offered *beneficia*. Thus they maintained aristocratic privilege by preserving the value of patronage networks (Riggsby 24–27). Systematic political campaigning not only subverted aristocratic control of the election process but also exposed the ideological rifts in the system. When Catullus applies *sodalitium* to the tenuous bond between two suitors courting two members of the same family, depicts himself choosing to “side with” (*faveam*) one over the other, and bases his choice on the grounds of previously demonstrated *amicitia*, he is alluding to the struggles over electioneering at Rome and pledging a vote for Caelius bestowed for reasons of *gratia* and not elicited by unlawful canvassing.

Because the scene is set in Verona, the speaker, on first reading, can present himself as physically removed from the fraudulent doings of the capital and thus able to honor the ideals of the *mos maiorum* and uphold them in practice. Obsession with Lesbia, the emblem of aristocratic venality, is mentioned only as a past madness. However, such a sanguine analysis of the fictive story line would leave details unaddressed. The motif of incest between siblings that surfaced in poem 79 and reemerged in the Gellius poems must render suspect the verbal play with the masculine and feminine forms of the proper name “Aufillenus.” Since “incest,” as we have seen, is a virtually transparent trope for secret political machinations, misgivings about the pair—and Caelius and Quintius’ pursuit of each, as well—may be reinforced by metaphors recalling scandalous efforts to fix popular elections. While we know nothing further of the brother, his sister will return in poem 110 to be accused of fraud and, in 111, of illicit commerce with her uncle. Instead of showing us a Catullus happily escaped from the immorality of Rome, this poem could imply that corruption is spreading to the provinces. Accordingly, the further attacks upon Aufillena, whose lying speech and sordid kinship relations turn out to be reminiscent of Lesbia’s, would serve notice that even a return to Verona cannot free Catullus from the evils of the metropolis.

What are we to make, then, of the speaker's lavish praise of his "candidate's" *unica amicitia*, tried by fire, and his corollary wishes for Caelius' triumph in love? On the one hand, if the conjecture *perspecta est igni tum* is correct, there is an exact precedent for commending *amicitia* in such a positive, indeed effusive, manner: in his *post reditum* oration to the senate, Cicero professes that he would prefer to give thanks to the deserving and preserve the memory of *amicitias igni perspectas* rather than dwell upon injuries (23).⁶⁴ Again, Catullus several times imparts distinction through the straightforward application of the adjective *unicus*, stressing the excellence of Penelope's reputation (61.221), the irreplaceability of an only son (39.5; 64.215). Yet at 73.6, *qui me unum atque unicum amicum habuit*, the scornfully quoted modifiers, slurred into resonance through elision, convey the hollowness of double-dealing hyperbole. One cannot help but hear some echo of that line in *unica amicitia*.⁶⁵ Finally, *sis felix . . . sis in amore potens* seem conventional expressions of good will, and the likely double-entendre of *potens* might be good-humoredly bawdy rather than derogatory. But these descriptors may also be applied to persons active in the public sphere. *Felicitas*, as Cicero maintains in his oration on behalf of Pompey, is a vital attribute of the successful commander because it is a sign of divine favor (*Man.* 47–48), and the man who is *potens* may be endowed with either official authority, *potestas*, or unofficial "clout," *potentia*.⁶⁶ Still, I cannot declare with certainty that Catullus' praise of Caelius is ironic—though the political nuances I perceive would lead me to deduce that.

As in 65 and 68a–b, Catullus associates his absence from Rome with an expression of grief for his brother, although the dramatic setting of the following lament, poem 101, is now removed to the Troad:

Multas per gentes et multa per aequora vectus
 advenio has miseras, frater, ad inferias,
 ut te postremo donarem munere mortis
 et mutam nequiquam alloquerer cinerem,
 quandoquidem fortuna mihi tete abstulit ipsum,
 heu miser indigne frater adempte mihi.
 nunc tamen interea haec, prisco quae more parentum
 tradita sunt tristi munere ad inferias,
 accipe fraterno multum manantia fletu,
 atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale.

Borne through many nations and over many seas, I have come and am present, brother, at these somber funeral rites that I might give you the last offering owed the dead and address your silent ashes—in vain, seeing that

fortune has taken from me your very self (ah, poor brother shockingly snatched from me). Still now, as it stands, accept these things, wet through with a brother's tears, which according to the age-old custom of our fathers are given as a sad gift to the dead; and forever, brother, hail and farewell.

The poet envisions himself arrived at his brother's grave to offer the *munus* due the dead, acting not on his own behalf but as a formal representative of the Valerii Catulli.⁶⁷ In the opening line, his voyage back to Troy through many peoples and seas recalls the proem of the *Odyssey* and so becomes "a tragic parody of Odyssean homecoming" (Fitzgerald 188). Situational irony, arising from his reflections at the gravesite, pervades the remaining verses. The poem takes the place of the ritual: it enacts the *conclamatio*, the final threefold summons of the deceased, while incorporating traditional language spoken during burial observances—the invocation of ancient custom and plea for acceptance of the grave gifts, probably too the concluding phrase *ave atque vale* (Quinn 1963: 81–82). According to the speech-act theory of John L. Austin, then, it is a "performative" utterance, a statement that accomplishes an effect in and of itself through the very process of being articulated.⁶⁸ It is the *munus* of which it speaks, like all such offerings intended to ensure the dead man's survival in the afterlife and comfort the living by preserving his memory.

Even as Catullus begins to pronounce the conventional formulas, however, the intrusion of *nequiquam* (4) admits doubt of their efficacy. In the next couplet, he acknowledges that the essential personality of the loved one (*tete . . . ipsum*) is gone forever, a consciousness that renders cult action meaningless. Yet, with *nunc tamen interea*, he mechanically resumes the ceremony.⁶⁹ The ordeal of his Odyssean journey and the responsibility of serving as spokesman for his kin intensify the futility of what he is doing: he carries out the rites, finally, for no other reason than because he has come so far in order to carry them out. As performative utterance, poem 101 is intrinsically unsuccessful, and as *munus* it fails of its purpose when confronted with the nonexistence of its recipient. No poem of lament has ever brought home more powerfully, and more paradoxically, the uselessness of lamentation. Thus the closure it marks by its position in the elegiac *libellus*—involving the failure of art to bridge the chasm between life and death, the illusory nature of Callimachean poetic immortality, and the end of Catullus' resolve to sing songs made poignant by his brother's fate (65.12)—is definitive.

Between this valedictory for his brother and the two epigrams that round off the long succession of Lesbia poems, the author has placed a series of three quatrains followed by two invective couplets. All appear to

be “occasional” pieces, but none provides background about the circumstances that gave rise to it. The contribution of individual members of the group to the sequential development of meaning cannot therefore be fully recovered, and the implications traced out below are admittedly somewhat arbitrary. Yet when we analyze the thematic scheme of the first three poems we observe that both 102 and 104 undercut the impression of sincerity given others by the speaker, while 103, for its part, exposes the behavior of its comic target as inconsistent.⁷⁰ This is again an instance of A-B-A positioning; the thematic relationship of the two outer poems is, to be sure, relatively weak, but it suffices to establish the necessary contrast with the one intervening.

Poem 102 apparently pledges to refrain from betraying a secret:

Si quicquam tacito commissum est fido ab amico,
 cuius sit penitus nota fides animi,
 me aequae esse invenies illorum iure sacratum,
 Corneli, et factum me esse putum Harpocraten.

If anything has ever been entrusted by a faithful friend to a discreet companion whose soul's constancy is known through and through, then you will find me equally bound by the code of such men, Cornelius, and rendered an absolute Harpocrates.

Commentators think the rhetoric clumsy and prosaic; Fordyce (390) pronounces these lines “little better than doggerel.” Even apart from any perceived verbal inelegances, the expression *me . . . iure sacratum*, suggesting the oath of silence taken by religious initiates, is capped by a metaphor with, at this point, unfortunate associations. Allusion to the Greco-Egyptian divinity Harpocrates cannot help but recall the bawdy joke in poem 74 (pp. 83–84 with n. 50); hence the final words undercut the speaker's ostensibly solemn protest of *fides*. While this obscene construction of Harpocrates' iconography arguably could be Catullus' own invention, it might also have been already well established in popular culture because of the connotations of sexual license attached to Isiac religion. Thus the ending of poem 102 may be deflationary on purpose, its thrust parodic.

If so, poem 104 would serve as a suitable pendant:

Credis me potuisse meae maledicere vitae,
 ambobus mihi quae carior est oculis?
 non potui, nec, si possem, tam perditae amarem;
 sed tu cum Tappone omnia monstra facis.

You believe I was capable of speaking ill about my beloved, who is dearer to me than both my eyes? I could not have done that and, if I could, I would not love so passionately; but you, like Tappo, make a sensation out of everything.

The first point to establish is the identity of the unnamed addressee. Interpreters have fastened upon the mysterious "Tappo" as the key to the puzzle. Although this is an actual Roman name, found especially in northern Italy, it may have designated in addition a stock type of fool in Italian farce.⁷¹ Yet the name had other humorous associations, for the fictitious *rogator* of the *lex Tappula convivalis*, a republican-era spoof of tribunician legislation, is a "Tappo Tapponis f.," acting in conjunction with colleagues whose monikers—plausibly restored as "M. Multivorus," "P. Properocibus," and "M. Mero"—conjure up images of gluttony and intemperance.⁷² Since the *lex Tappula* was mentioned in a satire of Lucilius (fr. 1307 Marx, *ap.* Fest. 496–97 Lindsay), Catullus' audience would have known the name from that parodic context in any case. The final line of the epigram consequently trivializes the perceptions of the addressee by equating them with those of a popular comic character.⁷³

In the context of the *libellus*, this "tu" who assumes that the speaker's abuse of his mistress is genuine can only be the reader, led astray by the harsh pronouncements in 72, 75, 76, and particularly 79. Poem 104 is an authorial declaration performing a metacritical function similar to that of poem 16 in the polymetrics: at a given point in each book, Catullus anticipates and corrects a likely misreading of his preceding verses. In 16 the reader, through her surrogates Furius and Aurelius, is upbraided for imputing a sinister cast to the *basia* poems;⁷⁴ here she is chastised for taking the lover's angry language at face value. The epigram also picks up a motif thread, begun with poem 83 and continued at 92, in which one partner's ostensible disparagement of the other masks his or her true feelings. The cross-reference to 82 in *carior est oculis* may underscore that continuity by reminding us of the rigorous scrutiny to which this amatory conceit had there been subjected. Analytic scrutiny may be meaningless after all, however, for we simultaneously recall the juxtaposition of 82 and 83, which seems in retrospect to "prove" that words, to the skilled interpreter, can mean their exact opposite—or, at least, that the lover of 83 would sincerely like to think so. Serving as yet another denial of poeticity, another version of the "Cretan liar" paradox, poem 104 calls the rhetoric of the epigrams of erotic disillusionment into question while mentally preparing the audience of the *libellus* for the climactic struggle between disbelief and credulity found in the last pair of Lesbia poems.

The monodistiches 105 and 106 then return us to the political arena, although each is a droll, rather than biting, treatment of its subject. Poem

105 pokes fun at Mentula's frustrated efforts to ascend the sacred hill of poetry:

Mentula conatur Pipleium scandere montem:
Musae furcillis praecipitem eiciunt.

Mentula attempts to mount Parnassus; the Muses toss him headlong with pitchforks.

Because *scandere* has sexual overtones (OLD 2c; cf. Pl. *Ps.* 24), Mentula's effort is a form of rape, easily thwarted by a farm implement symbolizing the lack of urbanity in his verse.⁷⁵ This couplet accordingly parallels the mockery of Gellius' literary aspirations in 88 and also serves to connect 94, the initial poem of the Mentula sequence, with 114 and 115, the two epigrams on his estate at Firmum. The humorous point of 106 is less obvious:

Cum puero bello praeconem qui videt esse,
quid credat, nisi se vendere discupere?

What should someone think who sees an auctioneer with a pretty boy, except that he's desperately anxious to sell himself?⁷⁶

The couplet is said to be a frivolous comment inspired by some real-life incident (Thomson 1997: 542). As a social observation, however, it seems jejune, since the actual incidence of pretty boys glimpsed on the streets of Rome in the company of auctioneers will not have been high. Conversely, the punchline *nisi se vendere discupere* acquires considerable pungency if construed as another stab at P. Clodius Pulcher. Clodius' tribunician law *de exilio Ciceronis* had provided for the appropriation of Cicero's property and its sale at auction, putting the business of confiscation (*publicatio bonorum*) directly under Clodius' own supervision.⁷⁷ In Cicero's subsequent attacks on Clodius, accordingly, the notion of *venditio*—whether applied to selling one's services, selling oneself, or selling out others—is turned into an invective leitmotif.⁷⁸ This distich therefore looks directly back to 79, while again borrowing imagery and language from the *post reditum* speeches to recall contemporary political conflicts and hint obliquely at Lesbia's familial interest in them.⁷⁹

We come, then, to the last two poems concerned with Lesbia. In the first one, the speaker's emotional vulnerability sets off unusually poignant reverberations as he responds to what seems a total reversal of earlier circumstances:

Si quicquam cupido optantique optigit umquam
 insperanti, hoc est gratum animo proprie.
 quare hoc est gratum nobis quoque, carius auro
 quod te restituis, Lesbia, mi cupido.
 restituis cupido atque insperanti, ipsa refers te
 nobis. o lucem candidiore nota!
 quis me uno vivit felicior, aut magis hac quid
 optandum vita dicere quis poterit?

If anything ever befalls someone who eagerly longs for it beyond his hopes, this is welcome to his heart in a special way. So the fact that you restore yourself to me eager for you, Lesbia, is welcome to me as well and dearer than gold. You restore yourself to eager me, and beyond my hopes; you yourself restore yourself to me. O day marked with a whiter pebble! Who is luckier than me alone, or who can name anything more to be hoped for than this life?

Despite serious textual corruption in the third line and the last couplet, the basic scenario is clear: Lesbia has voluntarily returned to Catullus, who welcomes her back, it seems, without hesitation. Irony emerges only through subtle verbal reminiscences. *Si quicquam* echoes the qualified conditional openings of 76, 96, and 102, and the thrice-repeated *cupido* recalls, almost too emphatically, the wry *cupido . . . amanti* in 70.3. Most tellingly, the exclamation *lucem candidiore nota* is an explicit cross-reference to the speaker's abandonment of romantic illusion near the end of 68b. There Catullus admits he can exert no moral pressure upon his adulterous mistress, professes to accept her way of life, and stipulates only that she regard their meetings as special occasions: *quare illud satis est, si nobis is datur unis / quem lapide illa diem candidiore notat* (147–48). This mundane compromise with fact plays no part, of course, in the following epigrams of erotic betrayal; its reemergence at this late moment, in verses that ostensibly celebrate the lovers' reunion, calls attention not only to the foolishness of Catullus' brief euphoria here but also to the dubious quality of his claim to speak throughout the *libellus* from a position of greater intellectual and moral awareness. As the book-roll draws to a close, the echo of poem 68 reminds us that the opposition of Rome and Verona encapsulated there should be considered, in retrospect, the linchpin of the entire collection.

Poem 109 takes its departure, apparently, from the same situation but treats Lesbia's assertions with considerably more reserve:

Lucundum, mea vita, mihi proponis amorem
 hunc nostrum inter nos perpetuum usque fore.

di magni, facite ut vere promittere possit,
 atque id sincere dicat et ex animo,
 ut liceat nobis tota perducere vita
 aeternum hoc sanctae foedus amicitiae.

You offer me, my love, a gratifying promise: this mutual love of ours will be everlasting. Great gods, make her able to promise this truly, and say it sincerely and from her heart, so that we may be allowed to preserve for all our lives this enduring contract of sacred friendship.

In relation to 107, the positioning of this poem creates an illusion of chronological progression. Readers are asked to imagine an interval (marked, perhaps, by the intervening abuse of Cominius in 108)⁸⁰ during which Catullus has had time to reflect on the words of his mistress and, though still granting her the benefit of the doubt, develop renewed concerns about her sincerity. From the aspect of narrative, there is no satisfying closure at this point, and the reaffirmation of a previously betrayed ideal in the last line makes for a weak and open-ended resolution. In structural terms, however, 107 and 109 respond to the earliest Lesbia epigrams 70 and 72 as exact counterparts: each pair depicts the same set of circumstances confronted at successive moments in time. Since poems 70 and 72 seem logically posterior to 107 and 109, reflecting a deeper stage of the speaker's disillusionment, Miller argues that it is impossible to establish the priority of either pair "as they each become paradigmatic moments in the interpretation of each other" (1994: 59–61). Although this temporal contradiction remains tantalizingly unsettled, the schematic arrangement of the two pairs of epigrams yields a psychologically satisfying experience of *hysteron proteron*. Placement of the chronologically "early" poems last produces the same effect upon the audience as encountering the declaration of love, poem 51, at the end of the polymetric collection and realizing that 11, the expression of final rupture, stands in belated metrical and verbal response to it.

The last line of 109 also settles the tensions created by Catullus' use of contractual language to impose ethical meanings upon the conduct of his beloved. Throughout the epigrams we have seen him picking over the implications of her words, questioning whether what she professes bears any relation to her real intentions. His own discourse points up the deficiencies of hers, for, as Janan observes, the two modes of speaking operate on different semiotic principles: "Catullus sets up an implied antithesis between the language of politics, assumed to enjoy a straightforward correspondence between word and meaning under the aegis of religious and contractual rigor, as opposed to an amorous register, which assumes a

contradictory relationship between word and meaning” (92). In 72 Catullus’ appeal to the *gravitas* of paternal love and political affiliation, placed in uneasy contrast to Lesbia’s hyperbole, conveys just the right tone of earnestness. Between that poem and 109, however, the sequential reader has encountered too many reminders of how duplicitous the language of politics can be. Consequently, as Janan goes on to demonstrate, in the latter poem whatever terms “fall under the influence of the political field” are stripped of their moral weight (94). Rhetorically, the translation of Lesbia’s equivocal *amor perpetuus* into a *foedus amicitiae aeternum* fails to convince because the preceding topical poems have indicated that concepts such as “binding agreement” and “solemn ties of friendship” are no longer taken seriously at Rome. With that hint that the speaker’s hope for lasting *amicitia* is doomed to frustration, the Lesbia cycle ends on a note of futility. Thematically, that is the only way it can end.

Arrivederci, Roma

The last six poems of the elegiac *libellus* leading up to the final attack upon Gellius share a great number of common features and constitute an effective closing sequence. The series begins with two addresses to the Veronese matron Aufillena, introduced in poem 100 as the beloved of Quintius.⁸¹ In 110 she is taken to task for failing to carry out her half of a bargain:

Aufillena, bonae semper laudantur amicae:
 accipiunt pretium, quae facere instituunt.
 tu, quod promisti, mihi quod mentita inimica es,
 quod nec das et fers saepe, facis facinus.
 aut facere ingenuae est, aut non promisse pudicae,
 Aufillena, fuit; sed data corripere
 fraudando officiis, plus quam meretricis avarae <est>
 quae sese toto corpore prostituit.

Aufillena, decent girl friends are always commended; they accept payment for the things they undertake to do. You, because you promised me that of which you, in no friendly way, cheated me, and because you always take and don’t give, behave wrongly. Either you ought to perform, as a honest woman would, or you shouldn’t have promised, Aufillena, as a chaste woman wouldn’t; but to snatch up presents while shirking your obligations is worse conduct than that of a greedy whore who prostitutes herself with her whole body.

Apparently the symbolic polarity of Verona and Rome cannot be neatly construed, after all, as the opposition between an enclave of old-fashioned provincial virtue and a hotbed of vice.⁸² The Aufillena epigrams indicate, as poem 67 had done previously, that the capital has no monopoly on sexual depravity, even implying, perhaps, that Roman corruption has spread to the remoter parts of Italy. Nevertheless, this change in geographical locale marks a difference in the way such themes are handled. In the Lesbia cycle, the “language of aristocratic obligation” veils, in fact mystifies, the nature of the betrayal: while we learn that the beloved has done the lover an *iniuria* (72.7) and has violated *pudicitia* (76.24), we are given no insight into her motives. Now the ethical issues raised in those earlier epigrams are stripped of their romantic coloring and reduced to sordid essentials—the exact strategy adopted in 67 to undercut in advance the sympathetic representation of an adulterous rendezvous in 68b.⁸³

Aufillena is Catullus’ *inimica*, for she has gone against *amicitia* by defaulting on a contractual commitment (*mihi quod mentita . . . es*). As he spells out the terms of their tacit understanding—sex in return for gifts—he destroys her pretense of respectability: she is an amateur prostitute, more dishonorable in that regard than any professional. Davidson’s analysis of the Athenian hetaera as commodity item sheds light upon this assertion, for he notes that the slippery dealings of the hetaera, who professes affection with a view to material gain, create a spurious glamour absent from the frank commercial exchange of prostitution: “language, desire and the gift work together to maintain the ambivalence of the hetaera,” ensuring that the gift given by the lover is “not just a sign of desires satisfied, but is itself involved in the construction of desires” (204). It is that economy of deferred compensation encapsulated in Aufillena’s false language—and Lesbia’s, as well—that Catullus has finally exposed, showing it up for the counterfeit coin it is.

One last crushing jab is administered by the phrase *toto corpore*. By implication, Aufillena has not sold her whole body but only one part of it; that is, she had promised *fellatio*. Again the topos of the *os impurum* tropes a corruption of speech, for her mouth, though technically still pure, is metaphorically defiled by her lie. The idea of female hypocrisy then connects 110 with 111, where Aufillena is attempting to pass herself off as not just a proper matron but an *univira* who has known only one man:

Aufillena, viro contentam vivere solo,
nuptarum laus ex laudibus eximiis;
sed cuivis quamvis potius succumbere par est,

quam matrem fratres ex patruo <parere>.

Aufillena, that a woman live content with a single man is the highest form of praise for brides; but it's more reasonable for any woman to surrender to any man whatsoever than for a mother to bear brothers to her uncle.

It is evident that Catullus is accusing his victim of incest. However, the Latin word *frater* had a wider extension than its corresponding kinship term in English, being applied not only to a *germanus* or real sibling but also to *fratres patruales*, paternal cousins. Thus commentators debate whether Aufillena is bearing half-brothers to her legitimate children through adultery with her husband's brother or cousins to herself by a liaison with her own father's brother.⁸⁴ But this may be the wrong question to ask: Bush observes that the distinction between sibling and cousin is often blurred by native Latin speakers, since "cousins were not felt to be far different from siblings" (150). Instead of clarifying a division we see as clear-cut, the text draws upon an inherent linguistic ambiguity to suggest the confusion of kin-lines within Aufillena's family.

Whatever the exact relationship of the participants, poem 111, by alluding to the fruits of such a perverse union, rounds off the extended theme of incest in the elegiac *libellus*. Previously, a child born of incest was merely a hypothetical creature, a *monstrum* worthy to officiate at unholy rites (poem 88). Now, however, the products of incest are alleged to be real, and they extend the consequences of unnatural self-gratification into the next generation. The incest motif in 111 looks back to the improper activities of Gellius and his mother and sister as well as to the victimized and victimizing *patruī* of poems 74 and 78. In its close proximity to the final Lesbia epigrams, it also cannot help but recall Lesbia's own abnormal relations with her brother. Finally, the figure of the *matrona* who falsely claims for herself an honorific status, that of *univira*, but commits sexual irregularities within the privacy of her home is parallel to that of the bride in 67 who professed to be virginal but had been debauched by her father-in-law.

Poem 112 returns us to Rome, for it is the last of the five political monodistiches in the *libellus*. Unfortunately, its point depends on a play on words not altogether clear to readers at this remove and further concealed by supposed textual corruption:

Multus homo es, Naso, neque tecum multus homo <est qui>

descendit: Naso, multus es et pathicus.

2 discumbit Thomson, te scindat Schwabe (te scindit iam Haupt): descendit V⁸⁵

You're a fellow too much in evidence, Naso, but those who escort you to

the Forum⁸⁶ are not much in evidence: Naso, you're quite evidently pathic.

The joke seems to involve juggling at least two derived meanings of *multus* (Quinn 1973a: 451). The initial appearance of the word sets up the punchline by inducing an audience to apply *multus* to Naso in an obvious sense. Repetition in the same line shifts the meaning, through negation, to a collective, "but there's not many a man [i.e., no one] who. . ."⁸⁷ In the pentameter, finally, *multus* turns out to have another, wholly derogatory significance once its implications have been clarified by *pathicus*, the "sting in the tail" characteristic of Catullan invective.

Although most critics agree on this pattern of semantic development, they differ on the exact meaning of *multus* in the first and last instance.⁸⁸ For *multus homo* the colloquial implication that might come to mind most readily is "tedious, boring" (OLD s.v. *multus* 7; cf. Pl. Men. 316, *hominem multum et odiosum mihi*), which also works well in context: Naso has no political supporters because he is a tiresome fellow. *Multus et pathicus*, however, finds a better parallel in Sallust's description of Marius inveighing against the aristocracy, *antea iam infestus nobilitati, tum vero multus atque ferox instare* ("already hostile to the nobles before, he now assailed them doggedly and fiercely," Jug. 84.1). There *multus*, in a quasi-adverbial application (OLD s.v. *multus* 6a), conveys first and foremost the notion of repeated activity but also implies notoriety owing to habitual appearances in that role.⁸⁹

The same connotation would adhere to *multus* in Catullus' pentameter if we take *pathicus* as an adjective rather than a substantive. With the pathic's stereotypical insatiability, Naso constantly seeks to be penetrated anally, making his craving obvious. There is a political dimension to this slur, for in the electoral arena a charge of sexual passivity can be laid at the door of those industrious in their support of patrons: construction of political competition as a zero-sum game invited contenders to represent followers of an opponent as submissively serving their leader's own lusts.⁹⁰ In this figurative register, the distich alleges that Naso is a mere underling disposed to take orders as a lackey would and tirelessly hunting for a "greater *amicus*" to whom he can profitably attach himself.

Metonymic linkage between various forms of sexual irregularity and tainted, opportunist politics has served as the controlling trope of the elegiac epigrams. We come now to poem 113, which adopts an ironic, distanced stance toward that trope. The fact that Catullus addresses Cinna, his literary *sodalis*, indicates that this is a self-conscious poetic stratagem:

Consule Pompeio primum duo, Cinna, solebant
Maeciliam; facto consule nunc iterum

manserunt duo, sed creverunt milia in unum
singula. fecundum semen adulterio.

In Pompey's first consulship, Cinna, two men used to [do] Maecilia; now, with him consul-designate again, the two are still around, but each one has multiplied a thousandfold. The seed of adultery is fruitful.

The veteran adulteress Maecilia is unknown.⁹¹ No attempt is made at disclosing the identities of her original admirers, although Quinn (1973a: 452) calls attention to the metrical stress on *duo* in lines 1 and 3 created by a strong pause immediately following.⁹² Emphasis is therefore placed upon the fact that two different lovers have been enjoying the woman simultaneously.

Pompey is likewise part of a celebrated pairing: in both his consulships, the first in 70 B.C.E. and the second in 55, his colleague was his long-standing rival M. Licinius Crassus. However, Catullus here effaces Crassus' presence, using Pompey's career as the sole temporal marker. This is a significant exclusion in a poem that otherwise foregrounds duality. Omitting mention of the second magistrate implicitly defines the fifteen-year interval between the two consulships as an "age of Pompey." The intervening years have seen the rate of sexual infidelity increase exponentially, as shown by the growth in the ranks of Maecilia's admirers. Adultery breeds adultery: literally because one instance of wrongdoing leads to another, and more fancifully because "the semen of the men in question is itself potent and self-propagating" (Arkins 1982: 43). This reverses conditions depicted at the opening of the *libellus*, where in poem 67 sexual transgression in all its forms showed itself barren and even the bride's lawful partner had proved infertile (*sterili semine*, 26). Not so in Rome, where immorality flourishes.

Catullus' pointed reference to Pompey's celebrity and his employment of consular dating with its concomitant political overtones extend the significance of *adulterium* beyond the exclusively sexual. Technically the noun is also applied to the contamination of substances, while its cognate verb may be used for counterfeiting objects or falsifying documents (OLD s.v. *adulterium* 2b, *adultero* 2a, 3). In a more abstract sense (OLD 4) *adulterare* can denote a perversion of the good, as when Cicero labels *simulatio*, dissimulation or pretense, as "unsound" (*vitiosa*) because it "takes away our power to judge of the truth and adulterates it" (*tollit enim iudicium veri idque adulterat*), finally pronouncing it especially hostile to friendship (*Amic.* 92).⁹³ Within the *libellus*, the omnipresent pattern of imagery in which criminal sexuality is conflated with political duplicity has prepared readers to take *adulterio* here in that broader sense. The debasement

of the political system is figuratively pictured as a force of nature, self-perpetuating and inexorable. In a climate of ambitious, self-aggrandizing politics epitomized by Pompey—who had won his first consulship in the field, holding it while still under age and without going through the regular *cursus honorum*, and who obtained office a second time largely through “intimidation and dubious maneuvers” (Gruen 1974: 101) on the part of the newly renewed triumvirate—the escalation of unconstitutional activities cannot be prevented. Whether such a conclusion is fair to Pompey or offers an accurate picture of electoral behavior at Rome is beside the point, for this is simply Catullus’ ultimate verdict upon politics: corruption, like sex, is unstoppable.

In 50 B.C.E., Cicero will sourly mention the wealth of Mamurra, together with that of Labienus and Balbus, as a conspicuous evil consequence of Caesar’s ten-year *imperium* (*Att.* 7.7.6); Mamurra’s name is a byword for illicit profiteering. It is natural, then, that in both the polymetrics and elegiac epigrams he plays the foil to Catullus’ poetic *persona*, embodying the profuse success at the patronage game that eludes the speaker (Deuling 191–92). Now his affluence drives home the point made in 113 by once again illustrating the sorry outcome of preferential treatment for the undeserving. In poem 114 Mentula’s great revenues predictably disappear down a sinkhole of self-indulgence:

Firmano saltu non falso Mentula dives
fertur, qui tot res in se habet egregias,
aucupium omne genus, piscis, prata, arva ferasque.
nequiquam: fructus sumptibus exsuperat.
quare concedo sit dives, dum omnia desint;
saltum laudemus, dum modio ipse egeat.

Mentula is, not erroneously, called “rich” because of his estate at Firmum, which has so many first-rate things in it: all manner of fowl, fish, meadows, fields, and game. In vain: he exceeds its income by his expenses. So I grant him “rich,” on the condition that everything is lacking; let us praise the estate but stipulate that its owner is short of his daily bread.

Caesar’s henchman is said to possess vast holdings at Firmum in the Picene territory, off the Adriatic coast. Picenum was, of course, well-known as Pompey’s stronghold and furnished many of his most loyal adherents.⁹⁴ Juxtaposition of 113 and 114 must inevitably remind an audience of readers in the late 50s of the close ties between Pompey and Caesar. As in poem 29, then, the two dynasts, *socer generque*, are understood to be jointly responsible for the excesses of their creature.

In the following epigram 115, Mamurra's rapacity is subjected to a corollary attack, though couched in less explicit terms. Greed is figured as a surplus of libido:

Mentula habet †instar† triginta iugera prati,
 quadraginta arvi: cetera sunt maria.
 cur non divitiis Croesum superare potis sit,
 uno qui in saltu tot bona possideat,
 prata arva ingentes silvas altasque paludes
 usque ad Hyperboreos et mare ad Oceanum?
 omnia magna haec sunt, tamen ipsest maximus ultor;
 non homo, sed vere mentula magna minax.

Mentula has [what amounts to] thirty iugera of meadow and forty of plowland; the rest is swamp. Why should he not be capable of surpassing Croesus in riches, who in one estate possesses so many good things: meadows, fields, great woods, and deep wetlands, all the way to the fabled North and the farthest sea? All these things are great, but their owner is their greatest defender, no man but truly a portentous prodigious prick.

The previous poem had affirmed that Mentula's estate was impressive, but now it turns out to contain only twenty acres of pasture and twenty-seven of arable terrain.⁹⁵ Despite the relatively small amount of productive land available, the speaker waxes hyperbolic over the extent of these possessions. Irony can be protracted only so far; the comedy must be working on yet another level. Khan (7–9) proposed that the phrase *uno qui in saltu* contains a pun on *saltus*, "leap," in a sexual sense; this possibility suggests further puns on *pratium* and *arvum* as familiar metaphors for the female genitalia (Dettmer 1997: 221–22; Thomson 1997: 552–53).⁹⁶ On a figurative level, the threat posed by such avidity is again reminiscent of poem 29, where Mamurra's record of pillaging is said to arouse fears for Gaul and Britain (*nunc Gallicae timetur et Britannicae*, 20).

In the penultimate line the epithet *ultor* suggests that Mentula is also Priapus, the ithyphallic god who guards the boundaries of a farm and avenges the theft of its produce. This sets up the joke in the final hemistich, a parody of Ennius' epic paroemion *machina multa minax minatur maxima muris* (fr. 620 Skutsch). It gets funnier as we recall the narrative context of the original—an account of siege engines bashing city walls, another hackneyed image for aggressive sexual intercourse.⁹⁷ Hence Catullus' aphoristic dismissal *non homo, sed vere mentula magna minax* becomes a lapidary restatement of the major running theme of the epi-

grams and so produces sharp, effective closure. Yet this comic application of Ennius also prepares sequential readers for the sober allusion to the *Annales* in 116.8, where Remus' disrespect for his brother's city walls and consequent murder serves as a mythic analogue for present-day civic strife, and in addition voices for the last time Catullus' deep sense of fraternal guilt.

Unbridled promiscuity and disgusting sexual offenses—incest, fellation, anal receptivity—are leitmotifs of the elegiac *libellus*. As metaphors they encapsulate rampant abuses of political authority and rank, implying that in the public as in the private sphere self-indulgence engenders deceit and betrayal and undermines *pietas*. David Konstan associates the stance taken toward Mamurra's debauchery in poems 114 and 115 with Catullus' self-presentation in poem 11 as he bids farewell to his *puella*. Lesbia, Konstan suggests,

turns out to belong to the same class of reckless consumers, of those who take and give nothing back, as Caesar and his henchmen, who have extended the Roman realm for the sole purpose of feeding their limitless appetites. In this center of empire, Catullus represents himself as having no place. The final image, in which Catullus compares Lesbia to a plough and himself to a flower at the edge of the field, expresses his sense of marginality, of pertaining to the periphery rather than the core (Konstan 2000: online).

Thus it is not, or not merely, the cultural nervousness of a Transpadane and lesser *amicus* that accounts for the atmosphere of disillusionment within the corpus, especially in those poems that can be dated to around the year 55. Social anxiety, to be sure, would naturally arise under the circumstances. Yet, beyond the hints of class tension and unease over origins noted by Fitzgerald, Habinek, and W. J. Tatum (see ch. 1 above), the epigrams in particular also convey, as I have tried to show, a feeling of spiritual estrangement. But that statement, too, requires further clarification. In my reading of the poems, the Catullan speaker has not just despaired of an attempt to reconcile two incompatible sets of principles, those of the Valerii of Verona and those of the patrician Claudii at Rome—as Wiseman eloquently proposed (1974: 118, reiterated at 1985: 129). He has also come to doubt his capacity to make a contribution to the literary tradition through the Callimachean poetics he had espoused, because that poetics, for all its rhetorical brilliance, is ill-equipped to express his newfound perception of the tragic and incoherent in human life. Different anxieties and motives might be extracted from someone else's close reading of the arrangements of the elegiac book, but to me

those two concerns—moral disaffection and artistic uncertainty—seem to predominate. Keeping them in mind as hypothetical, but, I hope, plausible, causative factors informing the speaker's decision, we can turn back to poem 68 to better understand his defense of his permanent removal to Verona.

CHAPTER FIVE



A House Begun in Vain

Someone borrows accommodations from a friend for a clandestine meeting with a married woman. That might be a plot for a sit-com or, on a more sophisticated level, a Billy Wilder film, but one would not think it promising material for reflections upon the artist's obligation to society and the significance of his endeavors.

Catullus 68a–b, which takes that state of affairs as its point of departure, is a poetic diptych in which the aesthetic dedication required of the serious writer is weighed against the equally pressing duties owed to the familial unit. The controlling symbol is that of the *domus*, at once a physical structure, a line of descent, and, by figurative extension, the core and center of an individual life. In the second chapter, we considered the evidence for the name of the poems' addressee. It is likely that the same person is involved, for the addressee's *gentilicium* in 68b, "Allius," looks like a flimsy pseudonym for the "Mallius" of the accompanying elegy. His association with the textual speaker is equivocal: he embodies the reading public for contemporary poetry in 68a but is also the adherent of a disavowed poetics, while in 68b he is the recipient of an encomium, albeit a highly qualified one. This contradictory portrayal suggests that he is a fictive construct endowed with a *redender Name* that changes with his literary function. "Mallius" hints at a derivation from *malo*, *malle*, "to prefer," and "Allius" might pun on *alius* or its Greek cognate ἄλλος, intimating what is "other" or "alternative."¹ In 68a, Mallius speaks for the formerly desirable Roman lifestyle Catullus has left behind; Allius in its companion piece is the embodiment of the false dreams produced by the artistic imagination. Both, in different ways, represent impossible alternatives to the facts of pain and loss the speaker now confronts.

At the outset, "Mallius" has suffered a setback in love. In return for an unspecified *officium* (68.12), he expects Catullus to send him consolatory

munera. The speaker informs his correspondent that grief for his brother has put an end to his interest in love and poetry and now detains him in provincial Verona, although he claims, emphatically, that his *domus* and *sedes* is at Rome. This assertion should mean that his absence will be temporary, even if an immediate return is not anticipated. At the end of 68b, though, we have learned that the Roman *domus* was a product of wish-fulfillment or, rather, a poetic lie. The *officium* of Catullus' addressee involved collusion in adultery; erotic myth and epithalamic imagery have embellished memories of an illicit tryst in a borrowed house; the lapses of the promiscuous beloved, unconvincingly labeled a *verecunda era* (68.136), must be tolerated for urbanity's sake. Charged with guilt and remorse, thoughts of a dead brother penetrate but finally cannot quite dispel the haze of romantic self-deception. The closing lines of 68b contain no solution to the speaker's quandary, apart from declaring "his intention of cherishing what little he still has for as long as he can hold it" (Sarkissian 38).

From those concluding words the reader might receive further assurance that at some time Catullus will take up his literary vocation again. Still, the evocative depiction of Verona in 68.27–36 as a site of absolute barrenness, cultural as well as erotic, casts a proleptic shadow over all that follows. Will Catullus stay in Verona or return to Rome? Neither 68a nor 68b settles that question—that is, if the poems are read in their physical sequence, the one following the other in the *libellus*. Yet if the reader visualizes them instead as the missive they claim to be, two texts inscribed on facing wax panels of the writing tablet that forms the diptych, their integrated play of meanings, as she glances back and forth from one to the other, will point to a likely answer.

Mallius' epistolium

While discussing poem 50 many years ago, Eduard Fraenkel devised a valuable strategy for approaching the self-proclaimed verse epistle. Background information the correspondent may be presumed to know already, Fraenkel theorized, is being included *solely* to assist a third-party reader, who needs it in order to grasp the full implications of the text (1972 [1956]: 107). This subgenre therefore assumes two distinct internal audiences—one the epistolary addressee, whom we can designate the "narrative audience," the other an "authorial audience" reading the communication over the addressee's shoulder. That principle must hold true for 68a. If the poem really were strictly a private message intended for just one reader, it would be difficult to explain its association with 68b—a

work aimed at posterity, as we are told in lines 45–46. Furthermore, certain ironies to be noted later, of which the addressee would be unaware, indicate that a second reader capable of appreciating them is being rhetorically projected. It is a reasonable inference, then, that the initial *précis* of Mallius' *epistolium* and the quotations of phrases from it, direct or indirect, are clues to help a third-party audience construe poem 68a. Without close attention to such pointers, we cannot grasp the thrust of Catullus' carefully framed replies. Let us begin our reading of 68a–b, then, by reconstructing the ostensible contents of the letter from Mallius and taking up the speaker's response to each passage cited.

Mallius' circumstances are summarized as follows: a victim of ill fortune, he has written to the speaker asking for help (1–4). Venus will not let him sleep, for he has been abandoned by his partner (*desertum in lecto caelibe*, 6), nor do the Muses distract him with the work of earlier poets (*veterum . . . scriptorum carmine*, 7) during those periods of anxious wakefulness. Hence he reminds Catullus of their friendship (9) and asks for "gifts of the Muses and of Venus" (*muneraque et Musarum hinc petis et Veneris*, 10). The specifics of the request have provoked no end of discussion. No one doubts that *munera Musarum* has to do with poetry, whether by Catullus or someone else, but the implications of *munera Veneris* are less certain. Parallels for the expression in archaic Greek literature point to sexual activity and its pleasures as the obvious referent, which tallies with the "air of sexual renunciation" in lines 15–26 (Fear 249).²

European scholars tend to rationalize the difficulty away as an instance of hendiadys—*munera et Musarum et Veneris* simply means some form of erudite love poetry.³ One quotation from early Greek elegy, in which the two types of divine gift are combined in one act of speech, offers support: Anacreon praises the man "mingling together the shining gifts of both the Muses and Aphrodite" (Μουσέων τε καὶ ἀγλαὰ δῶρ' Ἀφροδίτης / συμμίγγων, *eleg.* fr. 2 West) when conversing at a symposium. Nevertheless, attempts to reduce the content of the appeal to a single kind of poem meet strenuous opposition in recent Anglo-American scholarship. Two counterarguments are put forward: the strong disjunction created by *et . . . et*, responding in chiasmic fashion to the earlier separate mention of Venus and the Muses in 5–8, and the unambiguous reference to two distinct favors in line 39, where *utriusque . . . copia* can only mean "a supply of each."⁴ Another option, equally time-honored, involves distinguishing two separate categories of writing, erotic poetry (*munera Veneris*) and scholarly Hellenistic poetry (*munera Musarum*).⁵ But Prescott (498) objects that a generic distinction between "amorous" and "learned" poetry is unparalleled. In addition, such an explanation ignores the evidence from archaic Greek usage, in which the gifts of Aphrodite

accompany, but are not identified with, sympotic song. It appears the problem cannot be solved all that easily.

We gather from the following couplet, lines 11–12, one additional bit of information about Mallius' request. Its fulfillment would repay a debt of hospitality: when mentioning their prior friendship, the correspondent had called attention to what was owed him. Catullus formally recognizes that claim. Indeed, he fears that in not complying with it he might appear to shirk his obligation (*neu me odisse putes hospitis officium*, 12). This fact, skillfully introduced, clarifies for the authorial audience why the speaker is treating Mallius' petition so earnestly. Despite its facetious character as a poetic *ludus*, it is caught up in that ethical nexus of *amicitia*, *pietas*, and *officium* crucial to the elegiac epigrams involving Lesbia and her lovers. In those epigrams, as we have seen, Catullus claims the higher moral ground in opposition to the degenerate behavior of his targets. Yet, in this prophetic foreshadowing of what is soon to be an obsessive motif, he finds himself unable, through no fault of his own, to meet the standards of reciprocity he will thereafter impose on others.⁶ As at so many other points in the *libellus*, the ironies of his position emerge upon rereading.

The ensuing *recusatio*, or at least that part of it that by consensus appears to pertain to the *munera Veneris*, begins at line 15 and continues to line 26. Because sexual activity is brought so strongly to mind by the allusion to the goddess of love at 17–18, many scholars deny that any secondary connotations of writing are present.⁷ Yet the ambiguous expressions *lusi* (17), *studium* (19), *commoda* (21), *gaudia* (23), and finally *studia* again, now in company with *delicias animi* (26), seem chosen for a purpose, as they all might embrace poetry as well as erotic pleasure. For that reason, I continue to believe (see Skinner 1972: 501–2 n. 15) that both pursuits must be understood. Although one might gather from a first impression that the speaker has only renounced the gratifications of sex, a second assessment after a close reading of 68b—which, as we will see, is thematically centered around questions of art and its validity—cannot help but make audiences aware of the poetically self-referential implications of this passage.

We will take up those implications later in this chapter.⁸ For the moment, let us move on to the next detail of the “back story.” It is contained in the extremely difficult lines 27 through 30, which became the starting-point of the present investigation. For the reader's convenience, I again give the Latin text together with the *apparatus criticus* as found in Thomson's edition, changing only the addressee's name:

quare, quod scribis Veronae turpe Catullo
esse, quod hic quisquis de meliore nota

frigida deserto tepefactet membra cubili,

id, Malli, non est turpe, magis miserum est.

27 vetone O, corr. O¹ catullo ζ: -e V 29 tepefactet Bergk, -fecit γ, -faxit

Lachmann: tepefacit V, al. -factat R² cubilli O 30 manli ε, Ric. 606, malli β, Mani

Lachmann, mi, Alli Schoell: mali V

Attempts at exegesis usually begin by tackling the problems of textual corruption. Let us see, however, whether something can be learned from a philological analysis of what is *not* in doubt.

As we are meant to infer from *quod scribis*, Mallius had rebuked Catullus by applying the expression *turpe [est]*, “it is disgraceful, shameful” (OLD 3b), to his presence in Verona. *Turpe* here is most often understood as a term of gentle reproof or “mock moral indignation” (Fear 257), something like English “it’s a shame that. . . .” However, Latin writers do not use the word so lightly.⁹ Mallius’ language must convey strong disapproval of the speaker’s absence. Catullus protests that the situation is instead *miserum*, “wretched,” taking the position that he deserves pity far more than censure.¹⁰ What he objects to, it seems, is the intimation that he had left Rome for selfish reasons. Now, *quare* at 27 introduces a direct consequence of what was just said—that Catullus, in the wake of his brother’s death, had banished from mind certain *studia* and *delicias animi*. Therefore the *munera Veneris*, in addition to being related to love and its pleasures and associated with a hospitality that must be repaid, are revealed as something he can be blamed for not remaining in Rome to provide. This fictive citation from Mallius’ letter has evidently been scripted with the third-party reader in mind.

Drawing that conclusion will not immediately tell us what those *munera* are. It does, however, allow us to look at the elaboration of Mallius’ comment in lines 28–29 from a new angle. Catullus’ absence is *turpis*, it seems, because “whoever is of the better class again and again warms cold limbs in a deserted bed” at Verona or Rome, depending upon the reference of *hic*. When construed literally, this elliptical statement has generated odd readings. If treated as an indirect quotation of Mallius’ words, it appears to complain of the lack of sexual opportunities for young men of good family in one or the other city. Understood as a direct quotation, it has been thought a rather tactless admonition that Lesbia, with Catullus gone, is involved with other lovers (e.g., Quinn 1973a: 378). In either case, however, holding Catullus himself responsible for the circumstances supposedly mentioned by attributing them to his absence from Rome makes very little sense.¹¹

On the principle that an epistolary poem, as poem, must be readily intelligible not only to its recipient but also to third-party readers, we may

rule out another line of exegesis freshly revived. Reducing *munera Veneris* to an elegant euphemism for “sex,” Kroll (218 and 221) assumed that Catullus was seriously asked to provide Mallius with a new partner.¹² According to more recent accounts, he is facetiously charged with having a surplus of girls available in Verona, the locale of *hic*, and asked if he might spare one (Woodman 101; cf. Fear 250–51).¹³ Supporters consequently postulate the real existence of an earlier letter, but then suppose that Catullus in replying to it felt no obligation to make the tone of the original passage clear. Since such an omission would certainly lead to misunderstandings, this hypothesis appears shaky. Moreover, there seem to be no *literary* counterparts for that type of proposition. Given the vagueness of Catullus’ wording, then, ancient readers would probably not have understood what the request entailed any better than we do.

If a literal interpretation of lines 28 and 29 can only give rise to far-fetched explanations of Mallius’ remark, we might do better to think in terms of a figurative meaning. As a fervent reader of poetry, Mallius might well profess himself abandoned, *desertus*, if his favorite writer had left Rome, and he might add that others were feeling a similar hardship. Believing that the aim of his *epistolum* was to induce Catullus to return, Bernhard Coppel therefore proposed that *desertum in lecto caelibe* and the parallel expression *frigida deserto tepefactet membra cubili* in line 29 were hyperbolic metaphors for the “ghastly boredom” that Mallius and the members of Catullus’ circle of Roman friends suffer in his absence.¹⁴ Following up on Coppel’s suggestions that Mallius is imploring Catullus to come back and is using erotic terminology for playful effect, we can arrive at a meaning of *munera Veneris* that fits well with the connotations of the phrase in Greek lyric, the apparent farewell to sexual activity in lines 15 through 26, and the hint contained in *turpe* that Catullus has defaulted on an obligation.

As poem 50 indicates, intense homoerotic language could be employed in playful *versiculi* addressed to fellow poets, for such professions of desire would not be taken literally by a trained reading audience. Poem 38 (where Catullus assumes the role of betrayed lover with the pathetic *tuo Catullo* and *sic meos amores*) is another example of this naughtiness. Additional corroboration arrives from an unexpected source. Pliny the Younger (*Ep.* 7.4.3–6) recalls that a Ciceronian epigram preserved by Asinius Gallus had inspired him to try his own hand at light verse. Although he does not quote the original, he offers a hexameter précis of its subject matter:

nam queritur quod fraude mala frustratus amantem
 paucula cenato sibi debita savia Tiro
 tempore nocturno subtraxerit. . . .

For he [Cicero] complains that Tiro, having cheated his lover by a wicked trick, at nighttime withdrew the few kisses owed to him after dining.

Modern scholars doubt the authenticity of the epigram, perhaps rightly, but its correct ascription does not matter here.¹⁵ What is revealing, instead, is Pliny's response to it. He believes it genuine, and therefore appeals to Cicero as a precedent for justifying his own attempts at verse. At the same time, he unequivocally pronounces the composition a "frivolous joke" (*lascivum . . . lusum*). When he resolves to commemorate the equally provocative behavior of his own "Tiro" (*fatemur/ Tironisque dolos, Tironis nosse fugaces / blanditias*), his use of the proper name as a generic term for "beloved" assumes that Cicero's freedman has been playfully assigned the role of boy-love, a transference no doubt suggested by the isomorphic relationship of inequality between patron and former slave. As Pliny relishes the amusing incongruity between the historical personalities of the two protagonists and the subject positions imposed upon them by the topoi of Hellenistic pederastic epigram, he models the receptive stance predicated for the sophisticated reader of such *versiculi*.

The formulas of desertion in 68.1–8 seem to indicate that Mallius had attributed his dejection to the absence of Catullus. Writing to lost lovers, Propertius' and Ovid's abandoned heroines similarly call attention to tear marks on the page, envision themselves on the brink of death, lament their chill beds, and complain of sleeplessness and anxiety.¹⁶ Assuming, moreover, that the indirectly quoted impassioned language of the first eight lines is to be taken as eulogistic (a "fan letter," so to speak) gives a plausible context for the speaker's ensuing formality. He does not commiserate with Mallius—the natural response had a real misadventure in love caused the correspondent distress—but rather expresses modest appreciation (*id gratum est mihi*, 9) for what had been said.¹⁷ The clarifying explanation *quoniam . . . dicis . . . muneraque . . . petis* spells out the actual situation for the benefit of third-party readers. Mallius regards the poet as an intimate (*me . . . tibi dicis amicum*), although Catullus' tone of "polite surprise" at this claim to friendship reveals that they were not in fact close (Wiseman 1974: 102). Presuming upon that acquaintance, he had couched his wish to see Catullus as a romantic confession, describing his company as *munera Veneris*.¹⁸ Sensitive to urbane nuance, the authorial audience is expected to recognize that the poetic speaker finds Mallius' effusiveness embarrassing.¹⁹

In diplomatically replying to this fan letter in his *recusatio*, Catullus, still employing the same amatory conceits, acknowledges the literary game being played and declines to enter into it. Accordingly, the phrasing

becomes very pointed: *multa satis lusi* (17) is to be read metaphorically as “I joked [in this way] often enough” and what are now banished from his mind, *haec studia atque omnes delicias animi* (26), are “pastimes like this and, what is more, all intellectual gratifications.”²⁰ The next two couplets acknowledge the effect of that decision on the friends who enjoy his poetry. Again deploying the clichés of the *sermo amatorius*, Mallius had charged Catullus with forsaking them: “here [at Rome] all the leading members of society feel the lack of your presence.” *Hic* is best construed as “Rome” because literary analysis supplies good evidence for considering what comes after *quod scribis*, from *Veronae* all the way down to *cubili*, as a direct “quotation” from Mallius’ letter. Diction and rhetoric are both peculiar. The attention-getting *turpe* is followed by a superfluous generalization, *quisquis [est] de meliore nota*.²¹ In the next line, *tepefactare*, a hapax legomenon, and *frigida . . . membra* crown an effort to expand and cap the writer’s arch metaphor for his feelings of tedium, the “solitary bed” of line 6.²² The language of 27–29 is so conspicuously odd that it seems to be inserted as a kind of ironic parody, epitomizing the artificial mode of expression being disowned in the *recusatio*.

Because he no longer engages in juvenile *ludi*, Catullus will make no further attempt to replicate Mallius’ affected diction, as he had done in the opening lines. In line 30 *turpe* is accordingly replaced by the plain *miserum*, which, if anything, understates the unhappiness of the speaker’s circumstances. This substitution exemplifies the “flattening of discourse” observed by Hubbard (1984: 42), for it initiates a shift to a lower register—prosaic, logical, literal—that remains operative until the end of the poem. It appears that the correction of *turpe* to *miserum* is, on a metapoetic plane, a symbolic rejection of heightened speech, indeed of all aesthetic intensification of reality. Accordingly, the entire passage assumes a twofold import well suited to the context: on one level, Catullus turns his back on the playful camaraderie of artists; on the other, he renounces poeticity itself.

When we at last focus our attention upon the textual crux, we find other data to support the interpretation proposed above. As Wiseman (1974: 96–97) points out, V’s reading *Catulle* allows a much smoother construction of the first clause, for “*Veronae turpe, Catulle, esse*” only asks the reader to supply *est*. Ellipsis would then be another feature of the breezy style being repudiated. Contrariwise, emending to *Catullo*—thus putting the words into indirect discourse and ascribing them to the speaker himself—requires *esse* to do double duty, an awkwardness that subverts an attempt to write plainly. To extend the direct quotation down to *cubili* will require just the substitution of the indicative *tepefactat* for the transmitted but unmetrical *tepefacit*. The corruption is best explained as a scribe’s stab at regularizing an unfamiliar word: Mallius had added to the

verb *tepefacere* ("to warm") the frequentative suffix *-to*, expressing the notion of repeated but futile efforts to overcome the chill Catullus' absence creates.²³ This is one more indication that his *epistolium* would have been couched in the same racy diction Catullus himself had adopted on prior occasions. For that reason, he also operates satirically as a negative foil for the author—or, better, a recollection of the author's "former self"—as well as an incarnation of the reading public for neoteric verse.

The only objection ever raised to reading lines 27–29 as a direct quotation has been that such a lengthy extract would be "unparalleled and improbable" in verse (Fordyce *ad loc.*; cf. Wiseman 1974: 97). What commentators are thinking of, however, is a case where a letter actually received was then excerpted in an epistolary poem. If we cast the net more widely, looking for passages in any genre quoted for *programmatic* purposes such as illustrating stylistic qualities, we find a close equivalent in Persius' first satire. There, in reply to an interlocutor who prefers mellow post-Ovidian versifying to the harsh-sounding *Aeneid*, the satirist produces a four-line, cliché-ridden pastiche of contemporary poetry, prefacing and following it with withering criticism (Pers. 1.91–106). Persius' quotation is (one hopes) imaginary; citation of the actual verses of predecessors, again for illustrative ends, is represented, for example, by Horace's famous reference to a line and a half of Ennius (fr. 225–26 Skutsch) at *Satires* 1.4.60–61. Reasonable parallels for a direct quotation of the correspondent's letter can be found, then, if we slightly adjust our preconception of what we should be looking for.

In the next couplet (31–32) Mallius is therefore (*igitur*) asked to pardon Catullus for his inability to bestow *haec munera*, these gifts of Venus. This couplet looks backward to what has preceded and sums up the *recusatio*.²⁴ However, we are not yet finished with the *epistolium*, for we still have to recognize and discuss one last extract from it. At 33 the speaker turns to the question of *munera Musarum*:

nam, quod scriptorum non magna est copia apud me,
hoc fit, quod Romae vivimus: illa domus,
illa mihi sedes, illic mea carpitur aetas;
huc una ex multis capsula me sequitur.

Now, as for the fact that I have "no great supply of writings at hand," this is because I live at Rome: that is my home, that is my place of residence, there my life is spent; out of many, one little book-box follows me here.

Nam quod must correspond to *quod . . . mittis* (1) and *quod scribis* (27): each pronoun introduces a statement from the letter to which the speaker then replies.²⁵ Mallius had brought up the point that Catullus would have no

library to work with in Verona.²⁶ Insofar as he speaks for the reading public, the writings of earlier authors cannot wholly satisfy him and he desires original poetry; lack of literary models, however, would make composition difficult. Hence Mallius must have offered this as yet another reason why Catullus should return to Rome. The speaker confirms that he has virtually no books available, emphatically adding that his life remains centered upon the metropolis. However, the otherwise gratuitous mention of the single *capsula* accompanying him indicates that he does have at hand one or more texts that might serve as exemplars (Lefèvre 314). These books, moreover, must be particularly meaningful to him in his present circumstances, considering the many others (*ex multis*) he might have selected instead.

To recap the “back story” behind 68a, then: Mallius, an acquaintance rather than intimate friend of Catullus, had written him a lighthearted letter of complaint, claiming to be miserable and sleepless over the poet’s continued stay in Verona. At the same time, he had mentioned a debt owed in return for hospitality—of what kind, we are yet to learn—and asserted that Catullus’ absence was also causing distress to other readers at Rome. Finally, he had asked for two kinds of *munera*: a resumption of personal contact, made possible by the poet’s return to the city, and the stimulus of new verse. In the final lines of 68a Catullus appears flatly to refuse both appeals:

quod cum ita sit, nolim statuas nos mente maligna
 id facere aut animo non satis ingenuo,
 quod tibi non utriusque petenti copia posta est:
 ultro ego deferrem, copia siqua foret.

Since this is the case, I would not wish you to think I am behaving with a grudging attitude or a lack of gentlemanly spirit because a supply of each *munus* was not put at your disposal when you requested them: were there any supply, I myself would have provided it unasked.

Even another translation like the one dispatched to Hortalus in 65 now seems out of the question, insofar as he sounds so utterly divorced, physically and spiritually, from the pursuits he had once cherished. It is the firmness with which he has spoken that makes the abrupt transition to 68b so startling.

Perhaps we should take a second look at those last four lines to see if they are as forthright as they initially appear. Line 39 contains a recognized ambiguity. *Non* might negate the entire clause, *non . . . posta est*, so that Catullus gives Mallius nothing, or it might only affect *utriusque*, in which case he meets one request but not the other (Kroll *ad loc.*; Prescott 486–87). On the latter hypothesis, *copia* also assumes two slightly differ-

ent shades of meaning in English: applied to writing, it denotes “quantity” but, pertaining to a person, it is better translated as “access, contact” (OLD 8b).²⁷ Catullus accordingly would apologize for remaining in Verona as he refuses *copia sibi*, the *munera Veneris*, but still offers some form of *munera Musarum*. If lines 15–32 and 33–36 are read as respective denials of each kind of *munus*, *non* is naturally construed with the verb rather than the pronoun. However, in the second passage there is no *explicit* refusal to send gifts, and mention of the *capsula* raises the possibility that certain resources needed for composition might indeed be available. It is therefore arguable that the ambiguity is placed there to prompt a rereading of 33–36, defining the next poem as a *munus* making use of those volumes the bereaved speaker had deemed relevant to his present situation. Through this strategy Catullus would direct attention to its intertextual aspects as crucial determinants of overall meaning.

As a *recusatio*, 68a is imbued throughout with programmatic elements. We ought therefore to expect some further indications of its function as a transmittal letter. One significant detail, requiring elucidation in commentaries, is the tense of the verb *sequitur* (36), present despite its obvious reference to a single past action. Fordyce (348) thinks the tense either a general present (“whenever I go”), which is not appropriate for the context, or a present used of a past action with continuing present effect, while Thomson (1997: 478) conjectures that it is used “loosely (in ‘conversational’ epistolary style) for *secuta est*.” Neither of the latter alternatives explains its precise semantic intent. I propose that *me sequitur* is both proleptic and, again, metapoetic: the *capsula* can be understood to contain the models Catullus will use in composing 68b, but also serves as a metonymic reference to 68b itself, anticipating its physical position after 68a in the *libellus*.²⁸ Interpreted in this way, the phrase confirms the pairing of the two poems as *munus* and cover note and likewise provides “poetological” textual evidence for authorial arrangement. At the same time, the genre of the accompanying poem is defined by negation. Written at Verona, where there are few Alexandrian tools of learning available, it will not be aimed at the scholarly reader who enjoys participating in the self-validating intellectual pastimes of the educated élite. Thus it will not adhere to the strict canons of Callimachean poetics.

Allius’ munus

Poem 68b, as was suggested earlier, is a seditious text. Under the guise of encomium, it interrogates two of the fundamental justifications of poetry—its claims to speak with a more compelling degree of truth and to overcome

time by giving lasting form and meaning to what is ephemeral. The poet's questioning of the first of these assumptions has been widely discussed lately. Sarkissian demonstrates the extent to which the speaker's idealized presentation of his romantic tryst with his mistress is ironically undercut and shown up as a falsehood by the poem's end. Applying the deconstructive tactics of Paul de Man, Hubbard studies how the figural language distorts alleged biographical experience, resulting in confused dialectic between the sublimated fantasies and anxieties of what he terms a "mystified" self (that is, a rhetorically constructed subject position) and the realistic compromises with reality made by that self's "demystified" counterpart (1984: 34–35). Lastly, Feeney has pointed out the incoherence of the poem's pervasive system of analogies: increasingly, as the text proceeds, simile falls short of contributing to the accuracy of the representation and indeed muddles it. Exhibit "A" is, of course, the Laodamia *exemplum*, which, despite the speaker's persistent attempts to map it onto his mistress, turns out to be wholly inappropriate for her and better suited to epitomize instead the passion and grief he himself feels. In calling attention to the inherent flaws of simile, Feeney concludes, the poem necessarily invites "more comprehensive reflections on the difficulty of catching experience in the mesh of words" (43). These approaches to 68b as a self-reflexive composition preoccupied with the nature and process of poetic communication seem justified by the climactic place it occupies in the demonstrably programmatic Veronese cycle. In this section, I intend to take analysis along such lines a few steps further.

First of all, the beloved, in anticipation of the role she will subsequently play in the elegiac epigrams, seems to be depicted as a crux of semantic uncertainties. She is a *puella divina*, envisioned originally as a "shining goddess" (70), and then as Venus coming to the speaker's embrace escorted by Cupid (131–34). Again, he terms her his *era* (136), someone with authority over him, perhaps as divinity, perhaps only as mortal mistress. Both implications are already operating within the poem: lines 76 and 78 are concerned with the anger of the *caelestes eri* and in 114 Hercules obeys the orders of a *deterior erus*. *Era* is not a purely reverential or even neutral epithet, then, but instead has nuances of dangerous unpredictability and arbitrariness. Though characterized as *verecunda*, "discreet," at 136, she is by no means satisfied with Catullus alone: she commits sporadic *furta* or "acts of dishonesty."²⁹ *Furtum* can be used of rhetorical duplicity.³⁰ Hence this representation of her is equivocal: as the speaker's flesh-and-blood mistress, she occasionally proves unfaithful, while, as the embodiment of poetic language, she arbitrarily, though only (he asserts) periodically, assumes significances beyond his control.³¹

Although this later passage (135–37) is the first point at which Lesbia's semantic instability is openly admitted, it is foreshadowed in the opera-

tions of figurative speech just before the moment she enters Allius' house. We recall that her advent is immediately preceded by an encomium of Catullus' benefactor expressly addressed to the Muses (51–66):

nam mihi quam dederit duplex Amathusia curam
 scitis, et in quo me torruerit genere,
 cum tantum arderem quantum Trinacria rupes
 lympaque in Oetaeis Malia Thermopylis,
 maesta neque assiduo tabescere lumina fletu
 cessarent tristisque imbre madere genae,
 qualis in aerii perlucens vertice montis
 rivus muscoso prosilit e lapide,
 qui cum de prona praeceps est valle volutus,
 per medium densi transit iter populi,
 dulce viatori lasso in sudore levamen,
 cum gravis exustos aestus hiulcat agros:
 hic, velut in nigro iactatis turbine nautis
 lenius aspirans aura secunda venit
 iam prece Pollucis, iam Castoris implorata,
 tale fuit nobis Allius auxilium.

For you know what pain duplicitous Venus gave me, and in what category she parched me, when I blazed as hot as the Sicilian crag and the Malian springs at Thermopylae near Oeta, and my mournful eyes did not stop melting away from constant weeping nor my cheeks stop dripping with sad rain—as, glinting on the peak of a tall mountain, a spring bursts forth from a mossy rock, which, when it has rolled headlong down from the sloping valley, crosses at midpoint the route of a dense crowd, blessed refreshment to a tired and sweaty traveler, when the thick heat cracks open the scorched fields—at this point, just as to sailors tossed about in a black whirlwind a favorable breeze comes, blowing more gently, summoned by a prayer now to Pollux, now to Castor: Allius was such help to me.

In this brief excerpt there are four similes, two extended over several lines. Allusion to Hercules' self-immolation on Mount Oeta prefigures the important role of that culture hero later in the poem. Water imagery also links the gushing spring, a thematic doublet of the river Duras that sprang up to quench his pyre (Hdt. 7.198.2; Str. 9.4.14), to the seething *barathrum* of lines 105–17, which he reportedly constructed (Vandiver 2000: 155–56). Despite its significant contribution to the metaphoric economy of the poem, however, the thrust of the latter simile is not well understood, since its application is uncertain. It has been long debated

whether the water, as it flows downhill, corresponds to Catullus' tears or, as it brings relief to the traveler, gives concrete expression to the outcome of Allius' assistance.³² In fact, the referent appears to shift from the one to the other in the course of the simile; it necessarily follows that "the simile appears to be susceptible of referring *either* to the distress *or* to the relief of the distress . . . the identical words refer to two opposites" (Feeney 38; his italics). Critics have suggested that the ambiguity of the double application is metapoetically functional, serving as a reminder of the distorting quality of analogical language (Feeney 38–39) and a hint that the text must be read backward as well as forward (Vandiver 2000: 159).

If the Muses are the intended recipients of this communication, it may well have further metapoetic implications. Since they oversee poetic composition, they know that Venus' dealings with Catullus are two-sided, *duplex*, and they know the *genus*, the style of writing, to which those dealings pertain.³³ Allius' aid to Catullus was of such a kind, *tale . . . auxilium*, as was illustrated by what preceded, namely, the resonance of allusion and the equivocal turn of figures of speech. It is possible, then, that, as Hubbard suggests, the *domus* made accessible in the following lines is a metonymy for the poem at hand: "both contain the *communes amores* of the speaker and his mistress" (1984: 34). Accordingly, Allius can be said to have given Lesbia herself to Catullus, for the mistress of a house of poetry is its poetic matter (*isque domum nobis isque dedit dominam*, 69).³⁴ At the moment when experience is transformed into art, however, her "transgression" in stepping on, rather than over, the threshold hints that "the textual inscription is distorted and problematic, rather than clear-cut" (Hubbard, *ibid.*)

The stolen *munuscula* Lesbia has brought her lover (145) can be interpreted as both sexual and literary, like the combined erotic and poetic *munera* sought by Mallius and the *confectum carmine munus* bestowed upon Allius. In the sphere of textuality, though, they are *furtiva*, predictably imprecise and deceptive. Lesbia is herself imagined as performing an act of what might be termed "inscription": she marks the day reserved for Catullus with a whiter stone (*lapide . . . candidiore*, 148). Representationally, her action assigns to experience a purely relative value, since the stone's degree of whiteness remains unspecified; it is, moreover, only a conditionally realized event. When the same image is invoked again at 107.6 to describe the felicity of the lovers' reunion, a reader, having meanwhile confronted all the intervening epigrams of betrayal, cannot trust its sincerity. Lesbia as the signifier of untrustworthy language throughout the remainder of the *libellus* begins her operations here, in making a private determination whose strict meaning only she can know.

On becoming poetic matter, the mistress sets her foot down expressively, with a sharp, clear-cut sound.³⁵ Thus she limits the text's potential to reach succeeding generations. Her transformation into a *diva* parallels that of Hercules, whose apotheosis takes place in line 115, *pluribus ut caeli tereretur ianua divis*. She steps upon an already worn sill (*trito limine*), just as his new status means that one additional god is to wear down (*ut . . . tereretur*) the entrance to Olympus. Unlike Hercules, however, she passes into what are provisional quarters, not a fixed and eternal abode. The gap in durability between the borrowed *domus* that is all Catullus can offer his figurative goddess and the timeless realm of the true immortals is a trope for the actual disparity between the poet's attempt to create art that endures and the long span of all human existence.

If Lesbia's arrival at Allius' house carries this metapoetic burden, it will naturally reflect upon the professed aim of the text. At the beginning and end of the poem, Catullus declares his intention of bestowing lasting fame upon the dedicatee's *nomen*. Contemporary scholars, even when responding to the figured language of 68b with due caution, still take its stated objective for granted. The speaker, they conclude, has succeeded in celebrating his friend artistically, and their "stories of reading" accordingly end on a positive note: in the process of creating a lasting *munus*, he has "found, as it were, a new emotional center of gravity" (Bright 1976: 108); he takes up "the burden of his poetry and vocation" and by doing so becomes "a useful member of society, able to offer his patron after all *munera et Musarum et Veneris*" (Newman 236–37). Even Janan, for whom 68 terminates in dissonance and irresolution, sees Catullus as certain of the permanence of his art: when he inserts his own name at line 135, he "makes sure that if the *opus* that promises Allius immortality survives, it shall necessarily transmit its creator's name as well" (135). Yet the same indeterminacy that denies the author full control over his text also makes any promise of poetic immortality suspect.

The proem begins with the telltale elision *me Allius*, revealing that "Allius" is Mallius, and culminates in lines 49–50, where the speaker hopes to forestall obliteration of Allius' otherwise forgotten name: *nec tenuem texens sublimis aranea telam / in deserto Alli nomine opus faciat*. *Desertus* can be explained as a transferred epithet for the abandoned tomb bearing Allius' epitaph, but, in view of its prominent appearances in 68a, could reinforce for the sequential reader a connection with the Mallius whom Catullus was there said to have "deserted." Because the spider, *aranea*, weaving its web is a conventional symbol of the poet and *tenuis* the established Latin equivalent for the Callimachean buzzword *λεπτός*, there is a level on which this wish is programmatic.³⁶ As such, it undercuts the commemorative intent expressed previously, for it draws

attention to the spider-poet *concealing* Allius' name in the process of doing his work and so emphasizes the inconsistency of a false name being preserved for posterity.³⁷

At the end of 68b, Catullus reiterates his intention of compensating Allius for his *officia* by preserving his *nomen*:

hoc tibi, quod potui, confectum carmine munus
 pro multis, Alli, redditur officiis,
 ne vestrum scabra tangat robigine nomen
 haec atque illa dies atque alia atque alia.

This gift fashioned of song, such as I could do, is rendered to you, Allius, in return for many benefits, lest this and the following day, and another after another, touch your name with flaky rust.

Earlier it was suggested that "Allius" may pun on Latin *alius*. After the vocative *Alli* in line 150, the double repetition of *alia* in the following couplet and the assonance with *qualia* of the elided phrase *atque alia atque alia* seem designed to call such a possibility to mind (Kennedy 1999: 42–43). Again the language of the text runs counter to its ostensible purpose by slyly casting doubt on the authenticity of the name it transmits to readers. Repeated emphasis on the speciousness of "Allius" as a designation for the intended object of artistic canonization hardly seems coincidental.

The same semantic elusiveness that denies lasting fame to Allius by detracting from the truth of his inscription in the text also frustrates Catullus' desire to remember his brother eternally in *maesta carmina*, an undertaking proclaimed at 65.12 as the thematic aim of the elegiac *libellus*. Halfway through 68b, recollection of Protesilaus' death at Troy, "common grave of Asia and Europe" (89), leads the speaker to reflect, inevitably, on that of his brother. The lament already uttered in 68.20–24 is virtually repeated: through apostrophe, he again voices his loss (*ei misero frater adempte mihi*, 92) and states, in exactly the same words as before, that his whole *domus* is buried and all his *gaudia* perished (94–96). Because it explains his inability to write, the original "brother passage" in 68a is indispensable to the context in which it occurs, but the reiterated language in 68b is digressive and, in fact, could be removed from the poem without doing violence to sense or structure.³⁸ The motive for this duplication is therefore one of the most puzzling issues posed by the texts in combination.

As numerous structural analyses have shown, the dominant motifs of the poem build up, in more or less mathematically symmetrical progression, to the death of the brother in lines 91–100 and are then revisited

sequentially, in a kind of omphalos or “Chinese box” arrangement. Bright (1976: 103–5) plausibly argues for a tonal shift in the way each theme is presented for the second time: remembrance of the brother is a “filter” marking a change in subjective perception, so that the reprised motif is approached more objectively than it had been before. Within the lament itself, however, repetition of phraseology performs an allusive function, gesturing back in self-reference to the corresponding passage of the preceding poem (Feeney 44). Certain other instances of self-quotation in the Catullan corpus require a *locus* to be read in the light of one referring to the same situation at an earlier point in time. Thus line 4 of the dirge for Lesbia’s sparrow, poem 3, poignantly repeats the opening line of 2, *passer, deliciae meae puellae* (“sparrow, my girl’s pet”), and 37.12, *amata tantum quantum amabitur nulla*, looks back, with only a slight change, to the fifth line of poem 8, allowing the questions posed there—*quae tibi manet vita?* and the like—to receive a blunt answer. As I argued when discussing poem 99 (above, pp. 122–23), the resonance of such echoes is more easily perceived if they are imagined as being in quotation marks. Let me try a typographic experiment with lines 91–100:

... quae nunc et nostro letum miserabile fratri
 attulit. ei “misero frater adempte mihi,”
 ei misero fratri iucundum lumen ademptum,
 “tecum una tota est nostra sepulta domus,
 omnia tecum una perierunt gaudia nostra
 quae tuus in vita dulcis alebat amor.”
 quem nunc tam longe non inter nota sepulcra
 nec prope cognatos compositum cineres,
 sed Troia obscena, Troia infelice sepultum
 detinet extremo terra aliena solo.

... [Troy] which has now also brought pitiful death to my brother. Alas, “brother snatched from wretched me,” alas, pleasant life snatched from my wretched brother, “together with you our whole house is buried, together with you all our joys have perished, which your sweet love nourished in life.” Whom now laid to rest so far away, not among known tombs nor close by the ashes of kinsmen, but entombed at ill-omened Troy, disastrous Troy, a land of strangers holds prisoner in soil at the end of the world.

In these lines there is a patent instance of what Richard Thomas (1985: 185–89) terms “correction,” the author’s modification of his source text for greater accuracy. Line 21 of 68a reads *tu mea tu moriens fregisti commoda*,

frater ("you in dying, you have shipwrecked my blessings, brother"). Emphatic reiteration of the second-person pronoun, with the placement of the possessive adjective between them, stresses the private effect upon the speaker and even introjects a note of blame. In 68b, displaying what would appear to be a greater emotional detachment from the event, Catullus retracts his prior self-absorption: by omitting mention of his *commoda* and transferring the adjective *miser*, he makes it clear in the correspondingly placed line 93, *ei misero fratri iucundum lumen ademptum*, that his brother, rather than he, is the one who must be pitied. This alteration distances the apostrophe repeated word for word from 68a. There, as at 65.10–14, his fresh grief had expressed itself in a moving direct address. By quoting what was said before and then emphasizing in the next two couplets his brother's isolation from kin and interment in alien earth, he makes it clear those words were spoken in vain, for the dead man himself could not hear them. This episode marks a first step in emotional progression toward the tactfully hedged reservations about the efficacy of poetic communication in poem 96 and the ultimate nihilism of 101, where even ritually prescribed speech is drained of content.

It is perplexing that such doubts about the value of literary discourse should surface at mention of Troy, burial site of those whose immortal fame was enshrined in epic. Dismissal of the Troad as *terra aliena* indicates that Catullus is now dissociated from the Homeric tradition both imaginatively and psychologically. Thus he cannot turn to mythic paradigms for explicit illumination: the tombs he collectively rejects as *non . . . nota sepulcra* include, after all, that of Ajax.³⁹ In bringing up his own bereavement right after narrating Protesilaus' fate, however, he layers one fatality directly on top of the other. Despite that express rejection of mythic tradition, then, the attentive reader is still invited to seek additional correspondences between Catullus' brother and Laodamia's husband.

In view of the immediate context of fraternal grief, what every Roman conversant with Homer would probably have recalled at once is that Protesilaus too had a brother. After recounting the details of the Greek hero's death, *Iliad* 2.703–10 returns to the troops he had led:

οὐδὲ μὲν οὐδ' οἱ ἄναρχοι ἔσαν, πόθεόν γε μὲν ἄρχόν·
 ἀλλὰ σφεας κόσμησε Ποδάρκης, ὄζος Ἄρηος,
 Ἰφίκλου υἱὸς πολυμήλου Φυλακίδαο,
 αὐτοκασίγητος μεγαθύμου Πρωτεσίλαου
 ὀπλότερος γενεῇ· ὁ δ' ἅμα πρότερος καὶ ἀρείων
 ἦρωας Πρωτεσίλαος ἀρήϊος· οὐδέ τι λαοὶ
 δεύονθ' ἡγεμόνος, πόθεόν γε μὲν ἐσθλὸν ἔοντα·
 τῷ δ' ἅμα τεσσαράκοντα μέλαιναι νῆες ἔποντο.

These men were not without a leader, although they missed their leader, but Podarces, the offshoot of Ares, coordinated them, the son of Iphicles, son of Phylacus of the many flocks, full brother to high-spirited Protesilaus, younger in birth. The elder man was likewise the better one, the warlike hero Protesilaus; but the people were not in want of a leader, although they missed him, since he was a good man. Forty black ships accompanied Podarces.

Through ring-composition, the epic calls attention to the fact that Protesilaus' troops are not deprived of a commander. Podarces, the younger brother of Protesilaus, has taken over. His claim to succession by virtue of descent from father and grandfather is secure, although he is frankly not the man his brother was. This passage sends a strong message about the need for continuity even in the face of personal loss. Acknowledging differences between family members, it nevertheless emphasizes that an office inherited by virtue of social station must be filled and its duties performed, the disposition of the officeholder notwithstanding. Mythic polyvalence in 68b thus becomes even denser. For the death of Catullus' brother, Protesilaus' fall at Troy serves as a double analogue, since Homer's account of the incident deals with the preservation of social stability as well as the pathos of doomed expectations. If the character of Laodamia, the desolate widow, imparts subtle hints of the speaker's present emotional state, then Podarces, the second son (like Teucer, like Catullus) who inherits his brother's position even though less qualified to fill it, may foreshadow his future, given the choice between art and familial obligation he is being forced to confront.

As Catullus proceeds to reevaluate his involvement with Lesbia in the light of his brother's death, another mythic *exemplum*, that of Hercules, appears to take on a cathartic and clarifying function. Hercules is the paradigm of the benefactor rewarded by apotheosis and thus epitomizes Allius' immortality conferred in return for *officia* (Tuplin 135). Since he is introduced into the poem as a mythic analogue for the speaker, in recent criticism he has also become a surrogate for the poet who forges for himself an eternal link to posterity through his literary labors. Yet it may prove worthwhile to look at the intertextual framework for this comparison between speaker and culture hero. Allusivity, so intrinsic to the whole poem, again bears an equivocal meaning, with the result that art is once more problematized.

Let us turn back to the main Hercules passage. In 68.108 love had plunged Laodamia into a *barathrum*

quale ferunt Grai Pheneum prope Cyllenaeum
 siccare emulsa pingue palude solum,
 quod quondam caesis montis fodisse medullis
 audit falsiparens Amphitryoniades,
 tempore quo certa Stymphalia monstra sagitta
 perculit imperio deterioris eri,
 pluribus ut caeli tereretur ianua divis,
 Hebe nec longa virginitate foret.

. . . such as the Greeks say dries the rich soil near Pheneus in the district of Cyllene as the swamp is drained away, which on one occasion the falsely filiated son of Amphitryon is said to have dug by quarrying out the heart of the mountain, at the time when with a sure arrow he overcame the Stymphalian monsters on the orders of a lesser master, so that the threshold of heaven might be trodden by more gods, and Hebe not remain in protracted virginity.

Ferunt Grai is a classic instance of an “Alexandrian footnote”—a poet’s identification of a source for his treatment of a myth by making a general appeal to tradition (unspecified “Greeks”) while mimicking the form of citation found in learned commentaries (“they say that . . .”).⁴⁰ However, we would be able to infer from the peculiarities of line 112 the fact that Catullus is imitating an earlier Greek poem even had he not told us so himself. Use of *audire* in the sense “be called, be said to” is a calque on ἀκούειν, found only here with the infinitive; *falsiparens* translates Callimachus’ epithet ψευδοπάτωρ (*Cer.* 6.98); and the patronymic *Amphitryoniades* filling the entire second half of the pentameter is not only a metrical oddity but, in combination with *falsiparens*, a glaring oxymoron. The circumlocution for “Hercules,” the compound noun, the patronymic, and the rhythm “make this,” in the words of Fordyce (356), “one of the most Greek-sounding lines in Latin.” In the next two couplets elliptical references to key events in the Hercules saga, his subordination to Eurystheus, labors, ultimate apotheosis, and marriage to Hebe—the last of these described with witty irreverence (Kroll *ad loc.*)—are heaped up paratactically, almost as a travesty of the mannerisms of Alexandrian narrative.

Surviving references to Hercules’ construction of the drainage-system at Pheneus are scant. The fullest account is found in Pausanias (8.14.2–3), who preserves the local story that he dug a channel for the river Olbius through the middle of the plain and two *barathra* under the neighboring mountains Oryxis and Sciathis to receive the excess river water. Obscure regional legends involving famous mythic personages had

a special appeal for a number of Hellenistic poets. Although it is natural to think of Callimachus when seeking the lost predecessor of Catullus' passage, Tuplin has demonstrated that Euphorion's *Chiliades* may have an equally good claim.⁴¹ In the twelfth chapter of his treatise *De sera numinis vindicta* (557c), Plutarch catalogues three accounts of delayed retribution by Apollo, the first of which involves his destruction of the *barathron* and flooding of the plain at Pheneus in retaliation for Hercules' theft of the Delphic tripod a thousand years earlier (πρὸ χιλίων ἐτῶν). The two other examples are those of the triple devastation of Sybaris and the dispatch of Locrian girls to Troy as temple servants in order to atone for Ajax' rape of Cassandra. Plutarch's citation of three hexameter verses on the Locrian maidens indicates that he found that story, at least, in a poetic text, and shared motifs, including the involvement of the Delphic oracle and the fact that each of the three punishments was completed a thousand years after the offense, suggest that the other two tales were there associated with it. From the Suda's report that the *Chiliades* dealt with the theme of oracles fulfilled after a thousand-year period and the ascription of the word βέθρον (= βάραθρον) to Euphorion in the *testimonia* (fr. 148 v. Groningen), Tuplin (129–31) concludes that the *Chiliades* was Catullus' probable source.

The *exemplum* of Hercules is the most precious and contrived passage in poem 68; its juxtaposition with the touching pathos of the Laodamia myth makes its artificial features all the more discordant. Feeney (40–41) comments that the "bizarre pedantry of the [*barathrum*] simile . . . shows the emotional distance between tenor and vehicle at its most extreme," and that "the learned detail, the concatenation of data," gives a distinct impression of parody. He correctly assesses the tone of the passage but offers no explanation for a resort to levity at this point. Because seemingly inappropriate humor can be a distancing defense against what is hard to accept, its presence may imply a crisis in awareness on the part of the poetic narrator. Catullus suddenly recognizes that Hercules fails as an *exemplum* of poetic endeavor, since his technological feat did not achieve its objective.

Ancient sources unanimously testify that the plain of Pheneus often flooded due to blockage of the *barathra*.⁴² Pausanias tells us that in his time the river had gone back to its old bed, καταλιπὼν τοῦ Ἡρακλέους τὸ ἔργον ("having abandoned the work of Heracles," 8.14.3). The cause of one such disaster, according to Plutarch's speaker, was Apollo's vengeance upon the Pheneates for their patron's sacrilegious theft, a crime that would correspond on the divine plane to the act of ceremonial neglect committed by Protesilaus and Laodamia. Like them, Hercules had behaved in such a way as to call down the anger of Nemesis; consequently, his

achievements did *not* endure. If the construction of the *barathrum* at Pheneus is the mythic equivalent in 68b of the creative work of the poet, it is an emblem of transience and not eternity. Furthermore, if it indeed calls to mind Euphorion's *Chiliades*, a compendium of stories about belated divine vengeance, that would cast the speaker's own prayer to Nemesis for deliverance from wrongdoing (77–78) in an even more ironic light. The transgression, as the reader knows, has already been committed; it is the moment of retribution that is still in doubt.

Throughout the poem Catullus struggles to find a paradigm, mythic or divine, for his own circumstances. As the sardonic handling of his apotheosis and divine marriage indicates, Hercules will not do. Lesbia also falls short of the measure of devotion set by Laodamia, if only by a little (*aut nihil aut paulo cui tum concedere digna*, 131). Juno's forbearance shows him how to bear with his mistress' few lapses—yet, once uttered, that statement too is promptly retracted (138–41):

saepe etiam Iuno, maxima caelicolum,
coniugis in culpa flagrantem contudit iram,
noscens omnivoli plurima facta Iovis.
atqui nec divis homines componier aequum est. . . .

Often even Juno, greatest of the sky-dwellers, suppressed her blazing wrath at her husband's wrongdoing, conscious of the many deeds of promiscuous Jove. And yet neither is it right that human beings be compared with gods.

The fast reversal suggests that this analogy is taking him in a direction he does not want to go. Of course, as most scholars observe, the comparison fails in one obvious way: Juno was notorious for not putting up with her husband's amours and instead vindictively persecuting both his partners and the offspring of such encounters, most notably Hercules. The speaker's language, however, betrays other concerns. Reference to Juno's status as queen of the gods factors rank into the equation. *Despite* her position, Jove's wife and sister had to exercise self-discipline: his own relatively inferior station makes it all the more necessary for him to do the same. Juno's *flagrantem* . . . *iram* echoes Laodamia's arrival *flagrans* . . . *amore* (73), a hint that one passion comparable in its intensity to that of a mythic figure might presumably mask another. If Jove, lastly, is the equivalent of Lesbia, his unconcealed and omnivorous lust exposes her "discretion" as sheer self-delusion on the speaker's part. Such a train of thought must needs be suppressed.

Where do his reflections turn instead? After line 141, editors conjecture a lacuna of at least two lines. Something definitely appears to be

missing, for efforts to forge a logical connection with the succeeding pentameter *ingratum tremuli tolle parentis onus* ("take the unpleasant burden of the trembling father," 142) seem forced. This approach requires construing the imperative *tolle* as "have done with" and explaining *parentis onus* as a father's meddling in his grown daughter's business; the command to himself "stop behaving like an aged father" would therefore reinforce the decision made in lines 136–37 to turn a blind eye to his mistress' *furta*. However, both Kroll and Fordyce voice philological misgivings about that interpretation.⁴³ Moreover, the role Catullus assumes in relation to Lesbia is, throughout, one of husband, and the comparison he has just drawn between himself and Juno requires that the claim reluctantly conceded is that of a spouse. There must be another reason for mentioning a father, and specifically an elderly father, at this point.

If we assume a pattern of strict responsion, this section of 68b would have consisted of ten lines originally, corresponding to the ten lines of double simile at 57–66 and again at 119–28. Each of those segments attempts to find objective descriptors for Catullus' or Laodamia's state of mind; the present passage, on the other hand, turns away from fantasy to give a pragmatic account of realities. In admitting to the absence of a legitimate marriage and recognizing the fact of adultery, lines 143–46 invalidate the simile of the ardent but monogamous female dove (125–28). It is therefore possible that the lacunose text may have responded in parallel fashion to the preceding vignette of the *parens confectus aetate* and his only daughter. On such a reading, *tolle* would echo *gaudia tollens*, "taking away the joys," at line 123: Catullus directs himself to relieve an old man of his unwelcome burden. If we are again operating in the mode of *biographème* or quasi-autobiographical reference, the old man in question would be his own father, mythically personified as Telamon in poem 65 and as Laodamia's father Acastus through allusion to Euripides' *Protesilaus*. As *paterfamilias* of the Valerii Catulli, he would instantiate all those familial obligations now fallen upon Catullus, the sole surviving son. *Tollere*, however, is an equivocal word: in commands it directs the listener to either "take away, do away with" or "take up, raise," and puns based upon those contrary significances occur elsewhere.⁴⁴ In addition, the verb has the specialized meaning "take up a child in formal recognition of paternity" (OLD 2.1), a nuance that would be inescapably elicited by the noun *parentis*. Insofar as mortals cannot look forward to the privilege of personal immortality conferred upon deities, and insofar as the deathlessness conferred through poetic artistry is uncertain, hope of survival must rest upon preserving the family line. For that reason, Catullus directs himself to *take away* the anxiety of his father by *taking upon himself* the *onus* of propagating a legitimate heir, however personally unwelcome that burden may be.

This resolve, however, seems fleeting, canceled out directly thereafter by his determination to prolong his illegitimate relationship with Lesbia, on however limited a basis. When the reader arrives at the *envoi* it appears to have been forgotten entirely. After expressing kind wishes for others—Allius, Allius' own mistress, the *domus*, and another benefactor whose identity⁴⁵ is obscured by textual corruption—the speaker bestows them upon Lesbia, ostensibly in anticipation of a life lived in her company (155–60):

sitis felices et tu simul et tua vita,
 et domus in qua⁴⁶ <nos> lusimus et domina,
 et qui principio nobis †terram dedit aufert†
 a quo sunt primo omnia nata bona,
 et longe ante omnes mihi quae me carior ipso est,
 lux mea, qua viva vivere dulce mihi est.

May you be fortunate, both you [Allius] and also your love, and the house in which I and my lady sported, and he who for us in the beginning † . . . † from whom all good things first originated, and long before all others she who is dearer to me than me myself, my light, whose living makes my own life sweet.

Yet there is no overt reference to his future plans in the final couplet of 68b. Catullus does no more than proclaim his love for Lesbia; he says nothing to assure the reader that his life henceforward will in fact be sweet. Someone can will the happiness of another without necessarily anticipating it for himself, and an awareness that he himself cannot aspire to the blessings he pronounces on his friends would make these last wishes even more poignant.⁴⁷

For the outcome of the issue deliberately kept unresolved here, we must look ahead to poem 107. The speaker's exclamation *o lucem candidiore nota!* (6) unquestionably points back to 68.147–48, Lesbia's hoped-for designation of their moments together as "special." Lexical echoes make it probable that the following rhetorical questions—*quis me uno vivit felicior, aut magis hac quid / optandum vita dicere quis poterit?*—are an intentional cross-reference to the *envoi* of 68b.⁴⁸ The irony imbuing those questions is palpable, for the intervening epigrams of betrayal have left no doubt that the happiness expressed by the speaker is illusory. Poem 107 accordingly invalidates any expectation on the part of readers that Catullus will be able to come to terms with Lesbia's infidelities and thereby nullifies whatever optimism may have been present at the conclusion of 68b. Allius' *domus* is constructed on precarious foundations; once it has been exposed as a mere house of cards, its threshold cannot be crossed again.

Catullus' recusatio

Read consecutively, 68a and 68b enact a change of heart resembling that of Socrates in the *Phaedrus*. After Socrates, at Phaedrus' urging, extemporizes a speech portraying the lover as a potential source of harm to the beloved, he attempts to take his leave but is forbidden to do so by his *daimon* on the grounds that he has committed an offense against divinity (242c). Invoking Stesichorus' *Palinode* as a precedent, he then recants his earlier remarks and proceeds to deliver the famous discourse in praise of Love. Similarly, in 68a, the speaker emphatically denies that he is capable of writing. Yet, after reflecting upon the extent of his debt to his benefactor, he recovers the power to express his gratitude: "his desire to celebrate Allius has supplanted, at least temporarily, his grief over the death of his brother" (Sarkissian 13). Swept forward on a rush of creative emotion, he proceeds to craft a *munus* that comes fully to grips with, yet finally transcends, the pain of loss. Bright (1976: 109) describes the response produced in the reader:

Catullus creates in A an air of expectancy, aided by the position of the conditional clause at the very end: if only there were some way . . . B then provides the release to the tension, beginning as it does so abruptly and treating not the problem of Allius' desolation but what Catullus can discuss: Allius' help for him.

As we look back, then, it would seem that verbal allusions to the *Phaedrus* already noted serve to direct our attention to this structural correspondence, and that the apparent finality of 68.39–40 has actually brought about a transition to a new beginning.

However, the impression of cause and effect created by the juxtaposition of the two poems is deceptive, for it runs counter to the chronological order inscribed in the fictive scenario. Dedications are written after a book is completed, and transmittal letters postdate the works they accompany. Narratologically, 68a is *subsequent in time* to 68b, even though it is stationed as a preamble to the other poem: it is, as Hubbard (1984: 39) terms it, a "post-script in the guise of a pre-script." Once we recognize that 68a follows 68b in point of time, we are obligated to revisit it, approaching it now as anticipatory comment upon its companion piece. We discover that certain foreshadowings of the themes explored at length in 68b take on different implications from this new perspective. Application of the phrase *hospitis officium* (12), suggestive of honorable conduct, to the service

for which Catullus “owes” Mallius is sadly absurd in retrospect, as is Catullus’ insistence that Rome is the site of his *domus* and *sedes*, a residence he does not own (34–35). On the other hand, the prospective intent of the reference to a *capsula* (36) becomes more palpable, and the ambiguity of *non utriusque . . . copia posta est* (39) seems obvious immediately.

Previous exposure to 68b, with its myriad of poetic self-references, will also incline the attentive reader to take lines 15 through 26 as a statement renouncing not only amatory *ludi* but literary production in general. Since we have not closely examined that passage before, let us turn back to it:

tempore quo primum vestis mihi tradita pura est,
 iucundum cum aetas florida ver ageret,
 multa satis lusi; non est dea nescia nostri,
 quae dulcem curis miscet amaritiem.
 sed totum hoc studium luctu fraterna mihi mors
 abstulit. o misero frater adempte mihi,
 tu mea tu moriens fregisti commoda, frater,
 tecum una tota est nostra sepulta domus;
 omnia tecum una perierunt gaudia nostra
 quae tuus in vita dulcis alebat amor.
 cuius ego interitu tota de mente fugavi
 haec studia atque omnes delicias animi.

At the time when the man’s white garment was first conferred upon me, when vigorous youth was passing a delightful spring, I played around often enough; the goddess who mixes sweet bitterness with cares is not unacquainted with me. But a brother’s death took from me, because of grief, this whole pursuit. O brother snatched from wretched me, you in dying, you have shipwrecked my blessings, brother; together with you our whole house is buried, together with you all our joys have perished, which your sweet love nourished in life. Because of whose burial I have completely banished from my thoughts these pursuits and, what is more, all diversions of mind.

The metonymic linkage of Allius’ house with the mistress as artistic signifier imposes a double significance upon *domus in qua <nos> lusimus* at 156: Catullus and Lesbia together made poetry as well as love. Once that latent second meaning surfaces again in *lusi* (17), the self-reflexive overtones of all its accompanying nouns are activated. *Totum hoc studium* (19) implies that the sudden family tragedy brought to an end a complex but interconnected set of activities, such as those love affairs that furnished

matter for writing. *Commoda* (21) is broad enough to cover any favorable circumstance in life, and its use here should pick up the deliberately restrained *incommoda* of line 11, but the employment of *fregisti*, a very arresting verb, extends the shipwreck metaphor of the proem (cf. *naufragum*, 3) and therefore associates those *commoda* with the *munera et Musarum et Veneris*. The global declaration *tota est nostra sepulta domus* (22) thus has to include the figural “house of poetry” among the other institutions that had once centered the speaker’s existence and given it meaning. Upon learning that Catullus’ brother had nurtured (*alebat*, 24) all the joys (*gaudia*) now perished along with him, then, a reader would very likely think first of literary and artistic, rather than erotic, pleasures.⁴⁹ Retrospectively, *haec studia*, in emphatic conjunction with *omnes delicias animi*, closes the ring-composition in lines 19 through 26, while *mente* and *animi* in proximity point backward to the technical term *mens animi* at 65.3–4. In this second “transmittal letter,” structurally correlated with 65, that self-reference seems a final confirmation that the object of Catullus’ renunciation in whole or part is poetic activity.

This section, it should now be evident, operates when reread on a poetological level, executing a *recusatio* in the most limited and technical, yet unconditional, sense. Separate handling of *munera Veneris* and *munera Musarum* in the proem will have created a first impression that erotic pursuits alone were rejected here. As it corrects that assumption, the passage prepares us for the shift in register and corresponding disclaimer of poeticity that occurs at line 30. The implied change of heart, which occurred not in the sequential gap between 68a and 68b but in the temporal gap between the composition of Allius’ *munus* and its covering letter, means that possibilities ostensibly left open at the close of the previous poem have now been annulled. This ironic ploy is equivalent to the bold paradox of poem 65: in both texts, all the devices of art are called upon to repudiate art.

This is not a recusatio

Fully realized forms of poetic disavowal as practiced by Horace and Propertius take their departure from the orthodox hierarchy of genres: adherents of the supposedly lesser modes, lyric and elegy, apologize for not being able to write epic or tragedy. Nothing comparable occurs in Catullus, whose *recusationes* grapple, not with what genres or generic models the artist might choose to employ, but with a more fundamental question—whether art is conceivable in the face of suffering and death. That does not mean, however, that all consciousness of genre is absent.

Can the verses Mallius had wished to receive be identified with a given kind of poetry? Although internal evidence from 68a offers no certain answer, poem 38, a comparable request, specifies a type of composition that might have been expected. Cornificius is there asked for *paulum quidlibet allocutionis, / maestius lacrimis Simonideis* (“a small trifle of comfort sadder than the tears of Simonides”). The speaker is soliciting an elegiac *consolatio* in the manner of the Cean poet, graced with the pathos for which he had been famous.⁵⁰ At the outset of Catullus’ own *recusatio*, four lines look back toward his adolescence with authentic Simonidean melancholy:

tempore quo primum vestis mihi tradita pura est,
iucundum cum aetas florida ver ageret,
multa satis lusi; non est dea nescia nostri,
quae dulcem curis miscet amaritiem. (68.15–18)

At the time when the man’s white garment was first conferred upon me, when vigorous youth was passing a delightful spring, I played around often enough; the goddess who mixes sweet bitterness with cares is not unacquainted with me.

In timbre and subject matter, though admittedly not in language, the passage resembles Simonides’ lately rediscovered evocation of boyhood:

οὐ δύναμαι, ψυχ[ή,] πεφυλαγμένος εἶναι ὀπηδός·
χρυσῶπιν δὲ Δίκ[ην] —ομαι ἀχνύμενος,
ἐξ οὗ τὰ πρῶτιστ’ ἀνέο[τρεφέ]ων ἀπὸ μηρῶ[ν]
ἡμετέρης εἶδον τέρμ[ατα πα]ιδείης,
κλυά[ν]εον δ’ ἐλεφαντίνεον [τ’ ἀνεμί]σγετο φέ[γγος,
— : ∞] δ’ ἐκ νιφάδων [— ∞ — ∞]δεῖν.
ἀλλ’ αἰδ[ώ]ς ἤρυκε....⁵¹

O my soul, I am unable to be your faithful attendant. But grieved I . . . glorious Dikê, from the moment I saw from . . . thighs the end of my youth, when an ivy gleam was sprinkled with black, and from . . . snows to see. But [sha]me kept me back. . . . (trans. Sider 2001: 26).

Evidently the fragment comes from a love poem in which the speaker confesses himself unable to restrain himself from giving way to desire (M. L. West 1993: 11–12). The appearance of bodily hair, associated with the changing of the seasons by an image of plants emerging through snow, signals a transition from the role of the *eromenos*, the young beloved, to that

of the *erastes*, the active partner in homosexual *erôs* (Bartol 27). Catullus' verses are not a direct imitation, since they avoid invoking Greek paedastic conventions and describe sexual maturation, more appropriately for a Roman audience, in terms of religious and domestic ceremony. In their application of seasonal imagery, however, they elicit a comparable mood of nostalgia for a less troubled period of life. Assuming that this passage is loosely modeled on Simonidean elegy would fit nicely with Clauss' suggestion (238–39) that 68a is a *recusatio* assimilating certain features of the genre it professes to repudiate. Under other circumstances, lines 15–18 might easily form part of an amatory consolation making use of sympotic imagery borrowed from Simonides.

But what would be the thrust of such a quasi-reminiscence within a *recusatio*? *Recusationes*, as we have already seen, are paradoxes: they deny in order to affirm. So does Simonides. In a brilliantly intuitive reading of his fragments, Anne Carson, herself a major poet, probes the metaphysical resonances of his disclaimers. Simonides, she observes, employs negative expressions more frequently than any other archaic poet, often through the figure called *litotes*, the so-called double negative. For example, the assertion that human life contains suffering can be phrased as “Nor did those who came to be formerly, and were born semi-divine sons of the lord gods, come to old age having completed a life without labor, nor without death, nor without danger” (τούδ' ἄρ' οἱ πρότερόν ποτ' ἐπέλοντο, / θεῶν δ' ἐξ ἀνάκτων ἐγένονθ' υἱες ἡμίθεοι, / ἄπονον οὐδ' ἄφθιτον οὐδ' ἀκίνδυνον βίον / ἐς γῆρας ἐξίκοντο τελέσαντες†, 523 PMG), or, more simply, as “There is no evil not to be expected by men” (οὐκ ἔστιν κακὸν / ἀνεπιδόκητον ἀνθρώποις, 527 PMG). After considering several such passages, she remarks:

It would be an insult to the care which this poet lavishes upon telling us what is not the case to dismiss his negativity as accidental, incidental or rhetorical. His poetic action insistently, spaciouly and self-consciously posits in order to deny. To read him is a repeated experience of loss, absence and deprivation for the reader who watches one statement or substantive after another snatched away by a negative adverb, pronoun or subordinate clause. (148)

As for the import of declarations framed in this way, Carson proposes that the rejection of what might have been but is not requires a greater exercise of the imagination than an assertion of what is. Simonides' recourse to verbal strategies of negation expands his grasp of truth into the domain of the unreal. This is because *litotes*, as a trope, does much more than intensify: it opens up a momentary span of hypothetical existence for a counterfactual.

Knowing that, we can better appreciate the force of the double negative *non est dea nescia nostri* (17) embedded in Catullus' own retrospection. If *nescia* had not been neutralized, it would express current indifference to the speaker on the goddess' part. But that contingency is raised only to be discounted: rhythm, assonance, and understatement all reinforce the verb *est*, making it emphasize her *ongoing* interest in him. If she is even now "not unaware" of Catullus, it is because in his youth he practiced her rites often enough, *multa satis*, to implant lingering consciousness of himself. Thus the perfect *lusi*, even as it insists that the activity is over and done with, admits that the result of the activity still remains. Within a self-referential, metaliterary context, the long-term product of the *ludus Veneris* can only be erotic poetry, the poems of this collection. To be sure, art is not eternal—poem 68b made that quite plain—but it may last some time, perhaps more than one generation, which is all Catullus had initially wanted. Not without regret, then, and a barely articulated hope of survival, does the speaker bid farewell to his readers and his Muse. For the elegiac book, meanwhile, the *recusatio* has become a *litotes* raised to the second power. Beyond that we cannot proceed, but we are firmly in the grip of paradox, and paradox is the stuff of art.

Poem 68, claims Hubbard, "stands in a sense as a failed text, which goes nowhere, but incessantly turns back on itself in a dizzying spiral of contradiction and self-negation" (1984: 44). True enough, from a deconstructionist point of view. Yet we have seen this unique combination of text and antitext grimly attempt to confront the dislocations of the Roman cultural system with whatever resources of expression, chiefly irony and equivocation, might yet be available, given the breakdown of social communication illustrated in the epigrams. In doing so, it convincingly depicts the frustration of the artist still struggling to "get it right." Iser's concept of negativity (*Verneinung*) also seems to be germane to Hubbard's charge of failure. As I proposed earlier when discussing the problems of the Veronese cycle (pp. 58–59), apparent incoherence may contribute in crucial ways to overall meaning. As a condition of the text, negativity ensures that "failure and deformation" are not present as mimetic images of a flawed world, but as signs of underlying deficiencies in an all-too-comfortable conceptual structure, of "unformulated conditions" requiring actualization (Iser 227–29). It is just possible, then, that poem 68, with all its perceptible flaws, has nevertheless been assigned a weighty communicative task: to speak the obverse of Platonic truth.

Conclusion

Sometime in the late 50s B.C.E., a gifted writer who styles himself “Catullus” put together a collection of erotic, topical, and occasional epigrams composed in the first person, many addressed to prominent members of upper-class Roman society. Such short elegiac pieces may well have been created for recitation at banquets, following the practice of the author’s model Callimachus and contemporaneous literary figures such as Philodemus (Cic. *Pis.* 71). The order of the collection skillfully interwove a series of poems whose dominant theme was sexual and affective betrayal by friends and lovers alike with others stigmatizing political corruption, thereby suggesting that the two species of wrongdoing were mutually implicated. Because a far-reaching crisis of values in the Roman public sector had encouraged the spread of bad faith among intimates, linguistic meaning suffered a breakdown as the terminology of public life was drained of ethical substance. For an artist preoccupied with the moral content of transactions between persons, whether in the public or the private realm, that loss of meaning would be tantamount to silencing. Responding to those conditions, the *libellus* Catullus compiled took the form of a valedictory to his reading public.

To introduce the collection and provide a quasi-biographical context for what would follow, he assembled an elegiac sequence of five longer poems from pieces previously extant and others apparently composed for the purpose. There he represented himself, the poetic speaker, as having already left Rome in the wake of a brother’s sudden death to assume his filial responsibilities as sole surviving son of his Veronese family. In a dedicatory preface addressed to the distinguished Roman orator Q. Hortensius Hortalus, he explains that grief and depression are blocking his attempts to write and asks Hortalus to accept, in lieu of a composition

previously requested, the accompanying translation of a Callimachean *action*. This explanation would have seemed straightforward and unproblematic to posterity, were it not that the situation of the distressed Lock of Berenice as wittily represented in the original Greek poem resembles his own circumstances closely enough to create an uncomfortable parallel and thereby undercut the sorrow expressed in the transmittal letter.

Following the dedicatory introduction and translation Catullus placed one of the dramatic recitations for which he may already have been well-known as an amateur performer in Roman social circles. It was originally a self-deprecatory skit mocking his own stance as an adherent of Callimachean poetics and sending up his pretensions to a level of sophistication higher than that of his fellow townsmen. In the context of the introductory sequence, however, secondary issues are given the opportunity to move into the foreground. Bizarre intrigues having to do with adultery and propagation of an heir smoothly merge with serious themes already raised: the death of a brother, with its concomitant need for family continuity, and the new obligations of *pietas* imposed upon bereaved survivors.

As pendant to the first pair of covering letter and gift poems, the diptych closing the series of longer elegies seems incongruous. The addressee is demonstrably the same person, thinly disguised in one instance, and demonstrably fictitious; in each he serves as foil for the poetic speaker. The *epistolum* foisted upon Mallius by supposedly direct quotations in the transmittal letter is thick with clichés from the *sermo amatorius*, and the triviality of its concerns is shown up by the spare, flat tone of the speaker's own responses. When Mallius breezily dismisses Catullus' absence in Verona as *turpe* and pleads the "lovelorn" condition of the poet's fans as an inducement to return, his appeal is brusquely shrugged off. The succeeding poem affects to be a palinode celebrating Allius' prior services. Yet the promised gift of literary immortality is clouded by the dubious morality of those services, by Catullus' apparent blindness to the precariousness of his relationship with his beloved, and by intertextual echoes that cast what he says into doubt as they summon up the ghosts of prior poetic tradition. A closing benediction in which happiness is belatedly wished upon everyone associated with his Roman house of poetry has been all but invalidated by what has gone before. When the preceding epistle is then reread as a retrospective pronouncement upon the subject matter of the text it accompanies, its poignant *recusatio* takes on a programmatic function for the *libellus*. The speaker relinquishes his calling, but not without the hope that some trace of his endeavors—these poems—may survive.

Because the Veronese cycle has stamped a self-referential import upon the book, raising questions about familial *pietas* and opposing them to

problems of art and its validity, the assemblage of short epigrams can be construed as an expansion and development of motifs occurring in the first five poems. Often these motifs are inverted or approached obliquely. Apart from the initial elegiac laments, for example, Catullus' brother figures only once in the collection. However, the fraternal love the speaker expresses is intensified by contrast with a host of perverse relationships among other named acquaintances. The *patruus*, conventionally a bastion of old-fashioned virtue and role model for behavior, becomes the source of corruption within the extended family. Among the aristocracy, the crime of incest is endemic. Illegal intercourse sets up a closed circle posing a threat to Catullus and his own kindred: the obsession with *gens* displayed by Lesbius, Lesbia, and Gellius is thereby integrated with the speaker's fears about the termination of his own line. Obscure hints at complicated transactions between Caelius, Quintius, Quintia, Aufillenus, Aufillena, and himself are never fully clarified, but, in the face of such recurrent manifestations of familial vice, Aufillena's concluding affair with her own *patruus* is only too predictable. On the symbolic level, incest is both a sign of aristocratic exclusivity and an assertion of the integrity of Catullus' own sense of kinship.¹

Provincial Verona had at first functioned in the author's poetic imaginary as the comic doublet of Rome, the metropolis. The introductory elegiac cycle redefined it, however, as the locus of negativity—to return to Iser's formulation—for the speaker's earlier life, both public and poetic. Explicit allusions to northern Italy, such as we find in 97 and 100, should therefore remind us of where he is *presently* located as the *libellus* is being read: the satirical implications of the stercoraceous imagery of the first poem and the flip references to a hotly partisan electioneering scandal in the second will be tempered by the reader's awareness that the ostensible locale of such pronouncements has shifted from Rome to Verona, affecting the underlying polarity of urbanity and rusticity.

Lesbia, as we have observed, is a "written woman"—emblem of the neoteric poetic text, of linguistic indeterminacy, and of those elements of reality that evade final and concrete expression in art. The consequences of her illegitimate entrance into Allius' house are spelled out in the series of epigrams recounting her erotic betrayals. As she sets foot upon the threshold, she trails semantic flux in her wake. Since corruption in the public sphere has already destabilized the aristocratic social vocabulary, Lesbia, ascribed to that sphere by birth and proclivities, imbues poetry itself with a corresponding fraudulence. Thus Catullus can no longer maintain faith in the neoteric poetic project. Callimachean refinement, taste, and learning might have freed Roman poetry from its crippling association with patronage and political spin. If politics has already marginalized poetry and

rendered it innocuous by evacuating the moral content of words, however, neoteric originality can only advance in the direction of greater sensationalism and *recherché* obscurity. Catullus is unwilling to follow it there.

Although these several themes are unmistakably related, insofar as more than one will frequently surface within the same epigram or sequence of epigrams, their integration into a comprehensive poetic statement is finally left to the perspicacity of the individual reader. The complexity of social and artistic issues raised in the *libellus*, the deviousness of political dealings that subvert established constitutional processes, the irresolution experienced by the speaker as he confronts intractable realities—because of the generically driven, formulaic character of ancient poetic discourse, none can be given wholly satisfactory expression. Authorial arrangement therefore simulates the disturbing effect of such complexities by jarringly disrupting narrative and conceptual flow. In setting motifs adrift to jostle one another in a stream of semantic impressions, the elegiac *libellus* produces continuous challenges to earlier constructions of meaning and thereby reorders psychological awareness. As suggested in the introduction to this monograph, the experience of reading the entire collection sequentially can be compared to that produced by a corollary mode of Roman poetic composition, the neoteric *epyllion* with its temporal interruptions and inversions of expected narrative emphases.

This inference calls the notion of postmortem editorship into doubt. We saw that Eduardus a Brunér, in an 1863 Finnish publication, was the first to set forth lengthy arguments for that view. Brunér proposed that the collection originally consisted of three separate books arranged by the poet in chronological order; that configuration was then broken up by a later editor who, in copying the papyrus rolls into a single-volume *codex*, rearranged pieces according to meter, treating content haphazardly (609–10). Yet the apparently chaotic ordering of the poems in elegiacs has now been logically explained on other grounds. Furthermore, it is unlikely that chronology actually was a controlling principle of design in ancient verse collections.

Belief in posthumous editorship appears to have arisen out of a felt lack in the *liber Catulli*, namely the perceived absence of forward linear movement toward an artistically satisfying resolution. Chronological progression as an organizing principle is intrinsic, of course, to genres of Greek and Latin prose narrative such as history and biography and to their verse corollary, annalistic epic, but it need not shape thematically related lyric or elegiac sequences. Earlier readers may have drawn wrong conclusions about temporal displacements in the Catullan corpus because the modern Western poetic tradition had trained them to approach authorial sequencing with different expectations. Weaving of a chronological story thread

into a collection of poetry is already apparent in Dante's prose commentary to his *Vita Nuova* (Spiller 38–42) and in Petrarch's *Rime*, which simulates a poetic diary (Bermann 41–42). Semi-narrative continuity is also present in certain sonnet sequences produced in Elizabethan England, such as Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* (Spiller 6–7). In Shakespeare's sonnets, whose ordering may not be authorial, plot details are hazy, yet the emergence of the love triangle among the three principals, the speaker, the Fair Youth, and the Dark Lady, has a dramatic thrust (Fineman 131–32, 298). Romanticism's subsequent emphasis on the artist's unique genius and sensibility made the quasi-autobiographical sonnet cycle extremely popular among nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century poets, who created "stanzaic" chains purporting to reflect consecutive emotive moments in the speaker's life. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850) and George Meredith's *Modern Love* (1862) illustrate Victorian poetic practice; Edna St. Vincent Millay's *Fatal Interview* (1931) is a modernist example (Fuller 45–47). Accustomed to finding narrativity elsewhere, classicists looked for it in Greek and Roman collections, especially in the short lyrics that, in their view, preserved spontaneous reactions to private experience.² How else could that experience be made intelligible to a general reading public not personally acquainted with the author?

Ancient readers, however, did not approach poetic collections with the expectation of encountering chronologically descriptive accounts of private experience—judging, at least, by one instance of guaranteed authorial arrangement. Of the four poems in Horace's *Epodes*—1, 7, 9, and 16—that mirror the political tensions of the decade prior to Actium, *Epode* 9 is the latest in terms of internal chronology, for it celebrates Octavian's final victory over Antony and Cleopatra. Yet Horace chose to round off the series with *Epode* 16, a desperate escape fantasy reflecting a prior moment when civil war was still imminent. His placement of 16 as the penultimate text of his *libellus* leaves the collective political statement of all four epodes somberly inconclusive. Chronological inversion transmits a message of uncertainty about Rome's future: Actium itself is "not an end but a precarious beginning" (Armstrong 64), for to Horace's troubled imagination the chaotic violence of earlier years is always present, always on the brink of erupting once more. The internal progression of the series, forward and then backward, suggests a cyclic, rather than strictly linear, notion of temporality. Here is a case, then, where an author, through the intentional placement of his poems, makes chronological disruption serve a greater thematic issue. For the ancient lyric poet, narrativity achieved through temporal sequencing is therefore not a priority. But if the original premise on which belief in a posthumous editor rests is

anachronistic, and the phenomena it accounts for can be otherwise justified more economically, the validity of the whole hypothesis seems in doubt.

Presuming that she encountered it as a work coming from the author's hand, how might a contemporary Roman reader have responded to the elegiac *libellus*? Let us briefly think about a feature not often considered in discussions of ancient book arrangements, the impression made by the physical act of handling the book roll. John Van Sickle argues, plausibly, that the *process* of reading a rolled text—winding up already read material with the left hand as new material is unrolled with the right—imposes *methods* of reading distinct from our own (1980a: 5–6). The reader's eye passes slowly over a limited field, the two to four columns of continuous, unpunctuated writing visible between the tightly wound rolls. As previously assimilated text disappeared and new text came into view, the book itself must have been perceived as an “articulated ensemble.” Skipping around was virtually impossible, and even comparing one passage with another would have been awkward unless the two were quite close together. Necessarily, then, reading would progress more or less uninterruptedly from the first to the final column of the roll—where the *explicit* would force a return involving the converse of the original mechanical operations, both hand motions and eye contact. As Van Sickle remarks, the rewinding process then afforded “an opportunity to review the work in reverse order and to compare beginning and end” (5).

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from . . .

muses T. S. Eliot in the concluding section of “Little Gidding.” He was not thinking of ancient book rolls, but a Greco-Roman poet might well have adopted those lines as an aesthetic principle. The mechanics of reading a papyrus roll, which demanded rewinding the book upon reaching the *coronis* or mark of termination, would encourage compilers to employ hysteron proteron as a structuring device. Placed late in a poetic collection and met for the first time after the outcome of events is already known, a chronologically “early” poem surprises the reader, for at that narrative moment the speaker must be blind to what follows. As the book is rerolled, however, this poem assumes its natural temporal position as the predecessor to subsequent pieces, and thus becomes an ironic pointer to a future that is simultaneously, from the reader's perspective, already an experienced past. With further rereadings, forward and backward, those multiple chronographic implications expand. There is a sound aesthetic

logic in such oscillating poetic sequences, a logic heretofore largely unrecognized because it is so peculiar to the material circumstances of Greco-Roman literacy, so dependent upon how readers actually read.

With a corrective reading in reverse, many positional anomalies in the elegiac book disappear.³ We have just applied this principle in coming back to 68a after dealing with 68b. As we worked through the epigrams, we perceived a number of cases where a later epigram spells out the prefigurements of an earlier one. Thus the silence following 116, despite threats of added retaliation, makes poetic failure a retrospective issue in the collection, insofar as lines 5 and 6 point to the ultimate fruitlessness of the Callimachean artistic project announced in the dedicatory poem 65. The lost illusion of the *foedus amicitiae* in poem 109 provokes, in hindsight, the wrenching moral and emotional crisis of 76. We are reminded of the mundane compromise of the speaker's romantic ideals at the end of 68b by the caustic echo of 68.147–48 (*quare illud satis est, si nobis is datur unis / quem lapide illa diem candidiore notat*) in the ecstatic exclamation *o lucem candidiore nota!* at 107.6. Catullus' futile address to the *mutam* . . . *cinerem* of his brother at 101.4 responds in the negative to the question, raised at 96.1–2, whether anything can be done by the living to gratify the *mutis* . . . *sepulcris*. Revelation of Gellius' "incestuous" seduction of Lesbia in poem 91 clarifies why he is verbally assimilated to Lesbius at the outset of 89, and the fact that Rufus too is named as one of her lovers strengthens recollections of the judicial imbroglio in which P. Clodius Pulcher ("Lesbius"), L. Gellius Publicola, and M. Caelius Rufus had so recently been involved. Chronological reversals in the succession of elegies and epigrams are, accordingly, a more complicated version of the temporal interchange of 11 and 51 in the polymetrics whose rationale, thanks to recent scholarly investigation, is by now well understood. Catullus' poetic collection is a two-way street.

Yet if, upon arriving at the last line of poem 116, a Roman reader did not experience the sense of fulfillment imparted by an unqualified ending (such as *Carm.* 3.30, the triumphant close of Horace's three books of odes) but instead felt strongly impelled to return to what had preceded, the impression she received from the complete *libellus* would probably be similar to that conveyed by the "Actium cycle" in the *Epodes*. Repeated endlessly, the "various temporal patterns of reading and responsive understanding inherent in the collection" (Miller 1994: 74) would have left her, as they leave us, in a state of suspension. Deborah Roberts notes the reader's inherent craving for an "ending beyond the ending," whether it takes the form of a prophecy, like that given to Odysseus by Tiresias and then repeated by him to Penelope (*Od.* 11.121–37; 23.267–84), or that of the epilogue to a nineteenth-century novel, wherein all the main characters

are happily married off to each other. This desire, she explains, arises “presumably because the first ending in some way falls short of satisfactory closure,” for satisfaction results from finding a constant pattern in the mass of particulars. Hence only when the work has come to an end “can we be confident that the patterns are as we see them and will not change” (254).⁴ If this need for completion is not met by the text, it would be natural for the reader to seek it elsewhere—most obviously in the author’s life. Fascination with the subjectivity of the historical Catullus, as evident in later ancient authors such as Sulpicia, Ovid, and Martial and in scholarship from the Renaissance to the last decades of the twentieth century, may well be a quest for a nonexistent end to his book.

Epilogue: Schwabe Revisited

Catachresis . . . attempts to establish a metaphorical transfer of figure into the action in order to make it appear that the figure can “touch” the action; it is thus the principal trope on which the poet relies to make his interpretive claims about the action appear to have a place within it rather than reveal themselves as external and secondary to it.

—Susanne Lindgren Wofford, *The Choice of Achilles*

It's the Wednesday morning before Thanksgiving, and the implied reader of this monograph has just staggered into my office to turn in his seminar paper after pulling an all-nighter.

“Now that that's over, Professor Skinner, can I ask you something? Between us, what do you think really did happen to Catullus?”

Catullus who? The poetic speaker? And what do you mean, “happen”?

“No, like, the author Catullus. You've got him deciding to stay in Verona and carry on the family line. But Jerome says he died at Rome. Did he finally go back?”

Uh, wait. I hope you haven't misunderstood. Throughout the book I've been talking about a *construct*. A persona, if you want to use that word. The Catullus I refer to is a textual phenomenon whose subjectivity is a fiction extracted from the poems. We can't speak of the author. Authors are dead. Haven't you heard?

“Well, yeah, but . . .” He slumps into the nearest chair, then leans forward, frowning and steeping his fingers. “Remember back in the introduction, where you say ‘Catullus, *c'est nous*’? In reader-response terms, you mean the mental picture you get of the author is an essential part of the reading process. The reader imagines him, in the flesh, speaking to her as she reads, right? OK, according to Iser, she draws on her own knowledge

and experience to fill in the gaps and naturally, if she's a classicist, she's going to give the author she imagines a background and life story, based on the immediate historical context, any biographical data, and so on. So what do you think happened to *your* Catullus, the one you imagined when you were reading the poems?"

He looks over at me expectantly. The kid has absorbed all the theory, and he can talk it even when brain-dead. He should go far in this profession.

Well, all right, let's start with methodology. One of my basic rules is to look for anomalies, funny unexplained circumstances, dogs that do nothing in the nighttime. Many years ago, again when I was in graduate school, I read Peter Wiseman's *New Men in the Roman Senate*. That was how I learned there were well-known Valerii Catulli other than our friend the poet. One of them, as you recall, was L. Valerius Catullus the moneyer.¹ Eventually he became consul, so he was the one who finally brought the family to political prominence in Rome. Now, it was Augustus who appointed him to that office and gave him his leg up; and, out of all the young men who were members of well-established families in Cisalpine Gaul, he was the *only* one from the region so honored. Yet there were other families just as important, and Wiseman himself thinks it odd Augustus didn't promote more future senators from the area, because he visited it often (1971: 12 n. 3). "So why was *Lucius* singled out?" I wondered.

Then I came across C. Rubellius Blandus, one of his colleagues as moneyer. Rubellius was another *homo novus*, although a local one—his family was from Tibur. Tiberius made him suffect consul in 18 C.E., and then, in 33, chose him to be the second husband of his granddaughter Julia. This was a depressing *mésalliance*, according to Tacitus (*Ann.* 6.27.1), since people recalled that Rubellius was the grandson of a mere *eques*, and Syme plausibly suggests the match was designed to exclude Julia from the succession because of her mother's notorious affair with Sejanus.² The point is, though, that Rubellius may have been fast-tracked as a young man just because of that grandfather, who, says the elder Seneca (*Con.* 2 pref. 5), was the first Roman of equestrian status to become a professional teacher of rhetoric. Persons who achieved distinction in literary studies, Syme remarks later in the same article (1982: 78–79), created reputations their sons were able to exploit. Wiseman agrees: recently (1993: 227–28) he coupled the Valerii Catulli with the Rubellii of Tibur as "families of literary and cultural eminence" who rose rapidly in political standing during the early Julio-Claudian period.³

If Rubellius was selected for advancement because he was the grandson of one famous literary figure, it seems likely to me that Lucius might have been picked for the same reason. Supporting a relative of the poet who had smeared his adoptive father's name—even though he later apologized—

would have been a good p.r. move for Augustus, a sign that he appreciated poetry and carried no grudges. (This was before the Ovid blow-up, remember.) But it would have to have been a *direct* descendant—a collateral third cousin wouldn't have had the same symbolic value. And so there's a good *prima facie* case for presupposing that the historical Catullus might indeed have returned to Verona—right after his brother's death or later, doesn't matter—married, and eventually become the grandfather of Lucius, who, from his *praenomen*, must have been the son of another younger son. As for dying at Rome, maybe Jerome was wrong again, or maybe Catullus was there on a business trip. Will you buy all that?

"No, not entirely," he admits. "It's not a bulletproof argument. Though I guess it's about as good a case as you can make in Catullan studies."

Thanks a *lot*, but I won't quibble. Barring the possibility that some workmen laying a sewer pipe in Verona dig up Catullus' tombstone, I'll grant the scenario is unproveable. But it fits the facts, and it works for me. So there, you asked.

He shakes his head in disappointment. "Well—okay. But compared to Schwabe's, it's pretty banal."

True, I say defensively, but, if you're talking reader-response, both accounts, Schwabe's and mine, are, as I said, only stories of reading. Schwabe's has a nice theatrical finale. Mine's more realistic, that's all.

"And all stories of reading have to have happy endings. So each of you tacks on an ending that satisfies. For Schwabe, it's Byronic: early death is the price of artistic immortality, and his Catullus will never grow old or jaded. You, instead, allow Catullus to opt for the duty of preserving a family line that, as it turns out, endures for hundreds of years—instead of staying at Rome, continuing to write and involve himself in politics, and eventually, maybe, suffering a violent and meaningless death in the civil wars—look at what happened to Caelius. But, I hate to point it out, part of that could be a gender thing. Anyway, you know what Jonathan Culler says: happy endings are tropes, too."

To poststructuralists, life's a trope. (That was a feeble retort. He's right, and he knows it. Well, it's his problem from here on in.)



And, of course, the *actual* audience for this monograph will already have realized that my interlocutor the second-year doctoral student is also a construct, for there is no Ph.D. program in Classics at the University of Arizona. So perhaps all we ever have is the bitch goddess Language, and we have to make do with her. But she can be enough.

Notes

Notes to Preface

1. The text of 68.27–30 provided here is that of Thomson's critical edition of 1997, which I generally follow throughout this monograph; my few disagreements are noted in the course of discussion. I differ from Thomson in considering "Mallius" to be the name of the addressee; for remarks on this point, see chs. 2 and 5 below.

2. As Sarkissian 5–6 observes, difficulties with the text and meaning of lines 27–30 are closely linked to other troublesome questions: the correct name of the addressee, the cause of his distress, the nature of his petition, and, ultimately, the question of whether 68 is one poem or two. This knot of interconnected cruxes bears out Janan's sweeping epistemological assertion (1–3) that every category of problem within the Catullan corpus, both textual and interpretive, affects every other.

3. For other recent considerations of these topics, consult Powell and Fear.

4. Arkins 1982: 18 observes an emphasis on "sexual relationships that are distorted or corrupt" in the poetry set in provincial Cisalpine Gaul.

5. The woman in 68b is never named. Overscrupulous critics hesitate to refer to her as "Lesbia," even proposing that she may be some other female instead (so, e.g., Heine; cf. Stroh 1990: 145). Feeney offers a semiotic explanation for the omission: "The beloved herself is a gap, a vacancy to be filled with analogies" (43). I assume that she is Lesbia because the text's self-referential literary objectives require such an identification; see below, pp. 154–57.

6. "Published" is not the appropriate term, although it is commonly used. I will resort to it only when summarizing the positions of scholars who employ it. The process envisioned here is that of selective private circulation, as described by Starr: authors first solicited comments on work in progress from close friends, then made presentation copies of the finished text and dispatched them to dedicatees and other associates. Sending of gift copies, accompanied, in some cases, by the deposit of a master copy with a bookseller, signaled that the author had released control of the volume, so that further copies could be made from available exemplars. Quinn's slightly different model of dissemination (1982: 169–71) owes too much to modern publishing procedures.

7. Lipking (93–130) studies Goethe and Whitman as contrasting figures whose final works independently attain harmonious insight into the significance of the poetic vocation.

8. On the “Callimachean” affinities of these elegies, see Van Sickle’s pioneering study, which provocatively speaks of a “poetics of death” (1968: 507); cf. Clausen 1970 and Arkins 1988.

9. On the “almost universally unpleasant” background of poems 69–116, see further Arkins 1982: 34.

10. Attempts by classical scholars to write in the “personal voice,” as a way of demonstrating both how their own experiences have affected their understanding of ancient writings and, reciprocally, how deeply those writings have colored their professional identities, offer exemplary types of “embeddedness”: see the various essays in Hallett and Van Nortwick 1997 and 2001.

11. “An interpretation of a work thus comes to be an account of what happens to the reader: how various conventions and expectations are brought into play, where particular connections or hypotheses are posited, how expectations are defeated or confirmed. To speak of the meaning of the work is to tell a story of reading” (Culler 35, on reader-response criticism).

Notes to Introduction

1. For self-contradictory elements in the traditional reconstruction of the poet’s life, together with later attempts to solve them, see now Holzberg 19–21.

2. The affair with Juventius, for example, is assigned to 56 B.C.E. on the assumption that the cycle of poems in which Furius and Aurelius appear as rivals for the boy’s affections must have been written at about the same time as the dateable poem 11 (Schwabe 148–49). A chronological scheme of the *liber Catulli* is provided in an appendix (358–61).

3. Extant biographies of Terence, Horace, and Lucan derived from Suetonius give us some notion of what his life of Catullus would have been like. Wiseman (1985: 189–90) conjectures that the segment of Suetonius’ treatise dealing with the poets did survive into the early Renaissance.

4. Catullus refers to Pompey’s second consulship in 55 B.C.E. (113.2) and to the *porticus Pompei*, constructed in the same year (55.6). Allusions to Caesar’s invasion of Britain at 11.9–12; 29.4, 12, 20; and 45.22 must date to the end of 55 or beginning of 54; pressing the perfect tense of *fui* at 29.12 and the future of *time* at 20 implies that one invasion is over and done with, but another anticipated.

5. Cic. QFr. 2.4.1 (March 56 B.C.E.): *quin etiam Paulus noster . . . confirmavit se nomen Vatini delaturum si Macer Licinius cunctaretur, et Macer ab Sesti subselliis surrexit ac se illi non defuturum adfirmavit* (“and in fact our friend [L. Aemilius] Paulus . . . asserted that he would prosecute Vatinius if Licinius Macer were to delay, and Macer rose from the benches of Sestius’ supporters to state that he would not fail to do so”). Gruen (1966: 217–21) demonstrates that, of Calvus’ three supposed prosecutions of Vatinius in 58, 56, and 54 B.C.E., the only one for which firm evidence exists is the last, mentioned by Cicero at QFr. 2.16.3; hence the trial Catullus talks about in poem 53 must be that one.

6. His lament for Tibullus, in which this couplet occurs, pictures his elegiac colleague mourned by mother, sister, and his poetic mistresses Delia and Nemesis in an obvious commingling of fact and fantasy.

7. Ovid confirms that “Lesbia” is a pseudonym (*femina cui falsum Lesbia nomen erat*, Tr. 2.428), and Apuleius states that her real name was Clodia (Apol. 10). Wiseman (1969: 50–52) surmises that both authors drew on a work by Catullus’ near-contemporary C. Julius Hyginus, also a source for Suetonius’ *vita*.

8. This observation underlies vigorous attacks on Schwabe's chronology by Rothstein, Maas, and Wiseman (1969: 47–49). The one exception is poem 98, if its addressee "Victius" is really the informer L. Vettius who created a scandal in 59 B.C.E.; but the identification is problematic on other grounds. See below, pp. 119–120 and n. 46.

9. Cinna's *Zmyrna*, we are told approvingly (95.1–2), underwent a nine-year gestation period. Even if this is an exaggeration demanded by the metaphor, Catullus' sneers at hasty composition there and at 22.3–5 entail an ethos of careful craftsmanship, especially in the production of a neoteric showpiece.

10. Since a son *in potestate* could not legally own property, Catullus must have been living in Rome on a personal allowance, like young Marcus Cicero when he went abroad (cf. Cic. *Att.* 12.32.2, where Cicero envisions as a hypothetical alternative his son renting a house in Rome). A less likely possibility, which would certainly affect my thesis but for which we have no evidence, is that Catullus was an *emancipatus*. On the legal and social situation of the *emancipatus*, see Gardner 67–85.

11. Wiseman (1987: 338–40) points to a marriage connection with the family of P. Terentius Hispo, an influential *publicanus* known from Cicero's correspondence (e.g., *Fam.* 13.65.1, 51–50 B.C.E.), to document the family's commercial interests in Asia Minor during the Augustan age. Meanwhile, an amphora (Dressel type 7–11) found in Rome, which had contained *garum* imported from Baetica in southern Spain, is inscribed with the name of the importer: "C. Valerius Catullus" (*CIL* XV 4756). The container is dated to sometime between 40 B.C.E. and 60 C.E. Mention of pickled fish is incidentally a good deflationary tactic when undergraduates start identifying too intensely with the hero of the *Catullroman*.

12. Recent excavations in room 88 of the imperial-age villa have brought to light masonry foundations of an earlier villa, oriented in the same direction, which may date to the first century B.C.E. (Roffia 128).

13. For a meticulous account of the historical origin and development of the question, see now Beck's introduction (9–40).

14. Birt's mathematical demonstration (401–13) of the inordinate length of the corpus compared to that of other Greek and Roman poetry books was long cited as the decisive argument against the hypothesis that Catullus might have assembled his collection as a single unit. However, new data on roll length supplied by material uncovered since Birt wrote and calculations involving the variables of column width and number of verses per column cast doubt on his assumption that an ancient poetry book would contain no more than 700–900 lines (E. A. Schmidt 1979: 216–19; Van Sickle 1980a: 8). Minyard asserts that "there is nothing in the physical evidence to defend the notion that the Catullan book, as a book, was anywhere near being impossible in the age of the Classical roll" (1988: 346 n. 7). For the most recent reexamination of the evidence, see now Scherf 16–29, who arrives at the same conclusion as Minyard.

15. The difficulty posed by this inversion is voiced by Goold: "That [poem 51] should be placed so late in Catullus' collected works (especially later than XI, which was written as a repudiation of it) is misleading and inappropriate" (246).

16. Brunér, one of the first scholars to find problems with the organization of the corpus as it has come down to us, marshals numerous objections to the notion that Catullus might have put together all his poems as a single unit. These include the unwieldy length of the resulting book roll, the difficulty of including such ambitious pieces as 64 under the term *nugae* used in poem 1 to describe the contents of the dedicated *libellus*, the existence of ancient *testimonia* to works not included in the present *liber Catulli*, and the absence of comparable structures in other Roman poetic

collections. These are still the major arguments reiterated by opponents of authorial arrangement.

17. In defending Bruner's hypothesis, Wheeler 1–32 laid stress on the unusual physical features of the *liber Catulli*, including its length and variety. He conjectured that some smaller rolls and collections published by Catullus himself were expanded to include independently circulating poems and brought together sometime after the poet's death, though few traces of the original purposeful arrangement survive. This remains the standard position for critics unconvinced of the coherence of the entire corpus: see, for example, Fordyce 409–10. Clausen 1976 limits preserved authorial design to poems 1–50, while Martin 32–36 finds it only in the supposedly “chiastic” arrangement of 61 through 68. Others reduce the *libellus* dedicated to Nepos to a subsection of the polymetrics. Thus Hubbard 1983 argues that this “special collection known as the *Passer*” comprised only poems 1–14, while Stroh (1990), tracing structural and metrical parallels between the Lesbia and Juventius cycles, expands it to poems 1 through 26. Goold 8 voices an extreme degree of skepticism: no part of the collection was brought out in the author's lifetime or in the form he intended.

18. Ferguson 1988: 12–16 provides a digest of recent arguments for this position; Dettmer 1997 is an inclusive synthesis. For a skeptical reconsideration of the evidence for overall arrangement, however, see Beck ch. 2.

19. Jocelyn 1999: 336–41 has recently mounted a sharp attack on the designation of these sixty poems as “*polymetra*,” pointing out that the term, applied to an individual piece, is nonsensical and proposing instead the metrically descriptive terms μέλη, ἱαμβοί, and “Phalaecian epigrams.” While recognizing the validity of his objections, for convenience's sake I retain the adjective “polymetric” when speaking of these poems as a group.

20. The remarkable internal consistency displayed in each of the two sequences leads Stroh (1990) to deem 1–26 an independent *libellus* and Beck (289–90) to regard 1–14 and 14a–26 as separate *libelli* to which the remaining poems of the corpus were attached. In defense of extracting 1–14 from the rest of the collection, Hubbard (1983: 223–24) offers analogous examples of *monobibloi*, ranging in length from 76 lines (Horace's *Carmen Saeculare*) to 414 lines (the *Culex*), that could have circulated independently. It is conceivable that poems 1 through 26 may have once stood alone as a *libellus* (subdividing them further seems too extreme, given Furius and Aurelius' presence in poem 11 and the correspondences between 2–14 and 14a–26 traced out by Stroh). That concession would not preclude Catullus' subsequent expansion of the core collection. Indeed, if Hubbard, Stroh, and Beck are able to credit Catullus with the placement of the initial poems in the polymetric group, they must then offer positive evidence for asserting that he himself did not proceed to order the remaining pieces; the fact that the previous tight pattern of arrangement is discontinued after 26 does not prove that a second person was responsible for editing what follows.

21. Skutsch 1969. The importance of this discovery for the question of Catullan arrangement was quickly perceived by Quinn 1973b: 386–87; further discussion in Wiseman 1974: 109–10 and Skinner 1981: 21–24.

22. Given the metrical and lexical affiliations of poem 61 with the earlier μέλη, Jocelyn associates it with the preceding sixty items. I concede, in passing, that the final stanza of 61, with its injunction *claudite ostia, virgines: / lusimus satis* (“close the doors, maidens: we have played enough,” 224–25) constitutes a particularly fitting ending for a *libellus* as well as a poem (cf. the programmatic application of the verb *ludere* in poem 2 and the doubly charged statement *multa satis lusi* at 68.17). However, Jocelyn appears to believe that a formal distribution of poems 1–61 such as he proposes would

be incompatible with a corresponding thematic arrangement, and he also posits that “a scholarly editor aware of the generic distinctions of verse writing would seem at least as likely as the poet to be responsible” for such a design (1999: 341). To me, of course, both positions appear too conservative.

23. See the pioneering dissertation by Heck 4–13. Cf. Wiseman 1969: 2; Offermann 1977 and 1978; Skinner 1981: 13–15; Syndikus 1984: 58–62; and Santirocco 10–11. Claes 22–23 now proposes that descriptions of the thematic coherence of Catullus’ collection ought to look rather to contrasts than to similarities, a principle I have independently observed. On *poikilia* as a Callimachean principle, add Fuhrer.

24. Dettmer 1997 is the most recent attempt at schematic arrangement; she argues that “Catullus organized his poetry in nine consecutive ring structures on the basis of balanced similarities and contrasts, with a five-poem coda rounding off the whole” (255). Because she identifies a number of provocative juxtapositions and thematic connections, my debt to her will be evident. Nevertheless, the overall design she traces out appears too intricate to be readily perceived by the reader of a papyrus scroll and hence could not properly serve as a vehicle of meaning.

25. The special issue of *Arethusa* 13.1 (1980) dedicated to the topic of Augustan poetry books contains several short essays in sequential reading. Large-scale models of the approach include Van Sickle 1978 on Vergil’s *Eclogues* and, on Horace’s *Odes*, Santirocco; further examples may be found in Nethercut. Its applicability to the Catullan corpus was initially shown by Segal; additional arguments are put forward by Skinner 1981: 20–34 and Ferguson 1988: 12–16. Wiseman 1985: 130–82 is an important sequential reading of the whole corpus; however, his discussion of the elegies and epigrams focuses primarily on those pertaining to Lesbia. Claes stresses the function of both thematic and lexical repetition in associating juxtaposed poems (*concaténation*). Such linkages are certainly present and are taken into account in my own reading, but by themselves they appear too mechanistic and limited to give unity to the volume. Holzberg *passim* sequentially reads the corpus as a three-book collection, with different thematic concentrations for each section: although he observes many interesting and previously little-noticed connections, he imposes inappropriate readings on a number of poems, largely because he construes metaphoric obscenity all too literally.

26. For this reason, I am not convinced by Holzberg’s effort to map out five “thematic blocks” in the polymetric collection (72–87): while I would agree that the first group, poems 1 through 14, points to a contrast between Catullus’ relations with Lesbia and with his *sodales*, the poems in the other four blocks, as they are described, seem forcibly brought into conjunction with one another and their leading themes arbitrarily defined. On the other hand, I would agree that poems 11, 34, and 51, the three pieces in “Sapphic” meters, are placed within the collection as markers, or, as he calls them, “pillars.”

27. The text of Catullus, Miller contends, is the earliest surviving example of a truly lyric collection that projects the image of a multivalent, highly self-reflexive consciousness (1994: 52–77). Representation of such a consciousness is conceivable only within a culture of writing, which allows audiences to adopt recursive modes of reading the poems. Individual passages then enter into multiple kinds of relationships with one another, thematic and temporal, inviting readers to fabricate story lines explaining them; it is the poetic ego, however, that grounds all those potential narratives. Creation of a text replicating the workings of a divided psyche is the outcome of rational selection, achieving an impression of randomness through an “overabundance of order.” While Janan categorically denies Catullan editorship (ix), Miller is therefore inclined to accept it (1994: 75).

28. An analogous dynamic occurs in the modern poetic sequence, which Rosenthal and Gall characterize as a long lyrical poem made up of individual “centers of intensity” whose structure “resides in the felt relationships among them.” Rational and chronological systems of order are then “but two among many possible structural devices subsumed in a work’s lyrical structure” (6–7). Because of the greater flexibility of the codex, the structure of modern sequences is, of course, even more vulnerable to interruption during the reading process than that of their ancient predecessors.

29. See Ullman 101–5; further discussion in Scherf 60–63.

30. As corroborating evidence for a break after poems 1–60, Thomson 1997: 7–8 cites a reference to Catullus 52.1 in an annotated ms. of Terence, which is there identified as being *prope finem primi operis* (i.e., of the *liber Catulli*).

31. Most recently, Scherf 24–25 and 39, although he acknowledges the lack of evidence for that assumption.

32. On this hypothesis, 64 was afterward placed in conjunction with the wedding poems 61 and 62 and with 63, a remarkable composition perhaps conceived, like the epithalamia, for oral performance (see Wiseman 1985: 198–206, who suggests that it was a hymn commissioned for the Megalesia, and Newman 343–66, who believes it may have been a pantomime script). The conspicuous thematic parallels among these four texts persuade many scholars that the author was the one who assembled them into what became the second book of the collection.

33. For arguments to the contrary, see, however, Thomson 1997: 8–9.

34. My conviction of my own ingenuity is, I presume, not misguided.

35. Alongside Janan’s bold attempt to integrate contradictions in the presentation of the Catullan subject with cruxes in the text and then link both to the epistemological problem of a divided consciousness (5–8), it is illuminating to place Selden’s exegesis of poem 16 (1992: 484–89), which traces the essential paradoxes of Catullan poetics to clashes between the constative and the performative effects of speech. Despite disagreements, these readings are not mutually exclusive; rather, they reinforce each other.

36. Adler 8 observes that “Catullus regularly invites his readers to pose the question ‘who is speaking in the poems?’” Analyzing the tone and significance of prior written statements ascribed to the addressee and purportedly quoted verbatim has crucial ramifications for the interpretation of 68a, as we will see in ch. 5.

37. On the Roman poet as performer, see esp. Kenney 10–15 and Quinn 1982: 83–88.

38. However, I disagree with Quinn’s assertion (1982: 89) that Catullus’ short poems should be considered personal communications sent to addressees without a view to formal performance or publication. Fraenkel (1972 [1956]: 313–14) cogently demonstrated four decades ago that poem 50, ostensibly a private letter to the poet’s friend Calvus, was composed with a wider public in mind (see below, p. 144). The principle can be extended to all his occasional verse.

39. Here my thinking has been greatly influenced by Coppel’s reading of the *epistolum* sent by Catullus’ correspondent in 68a as a plea to return to Rome and his circle of friends (15–33), although I do not accept several of Coppel’s related conclusions.

40. “Reading” thus involves “rereading” the text, at least in recollection; for a narratological account of the reader’s mental effort to deduce a coherent picture of events from contradictory “clues,” see Winkler 60–93.

41. Cf. Hexter 332: reader-response criticism enters into “dialogue not only with the original text, but with the interpretations of other readers,” so as to render less likely “the replacement of an imagined (because unrecoverable) single authorial voice by the equally monologic voice of a single reader.”

42. I adopt Conte's position that literary communication is dialectical, "grasped through its organic attachment to the literary paradigms it draws on" and likewise "recognizable through its capacity to follow the rules of a specific 'grammar,' a grammar that requires the author to 'decline' those paradigms in a personal language of the author's own making" (1986: 206). By "paradigms" Conte means culturally constructed systems of metaphoric and metonymic relations among signifiers, organized as genres (1994: 108–13). See further Miller's analysis of genres as patterns of linguistic usage and constitutive codes of social ideology (1994: 40–44).

43. Rabinowitz 1977: 122–24 helpfully categorizes and explains various decoding practices mastered through literary experience.

44. Among Latinists, an intense debate over the propriety of considering authorial intention was triggered by Conte's professed attempt to "purge any excess of intentionalism from the concept of 'imitatio'" (1986: 26–28). This was taken as a sweeping repudiation of intent not only as a standard for judging the correctness of a reading but as a component of meaning to any degree, however slight. In rebuttal, Farrell 21–23 argued that Conte's theory is contradicted by his own critical practice, concluding that "the student of allusion is on some level concerned with a poet's intentions." Lyne 1994 provides a concise but quite accessible discussion of the epistemological issues, which are also touched upon briefly by Wills 15–17 and explored by Hinds *passim*. In a recent, admirably fair and appreciative review of Hinds, Conte now states explicitly: "Shifting the focus of attention from the authors' lives on to the texts served to remove many misapprehensions which were current then (and of which a few still persist now). This is why I felt the need to interpret allusion as one of the constitutive functions of the 'literary system.' It was however not my wish to rule out intentionality altogether, nor to deny that there were (and are) cases in which a poet's intention is unambiguously active in the text. To deny this would indeed be a preposterous idea" (1999: 219).

45. On the distinction between "the intent of the author" and "the intent of the text," see Conte 1994: 133–34. Edmunds contends that the distinction is a specious one, insofar as the latter intent must be determined beforehand by Conte himself in the role of reader-interpreter (39–43). Thus he rejects any residual possibility of a core of meaning historically resident in the text, tracing the source of all meaning, including intertextual meaning, to the interaction of text and reader (61–62), whose "structuring activity" controls the hermeneutic process (157). Although potentially valuable as a methodological premise, Edmunds' perspective is difficult to sustain while undertaking practical criticism, where production of meaning requires a focus on the text as object instead of the interpreter as self-conscious subject.

46. Freund 152, who concludes with the suggestion that this indeterminacy in the hermeneutics of reader response is beneficial insofar as it "invites a resistance to closure and an insistence on greater reflection and self-reflection," functioning "not as a methodology but as a 'speculative instrument' (Richards) in the service of reading" (156).

47. Altieri denies that his concept of authorial agency requires positing "fixed, abstract intentions, stable subjects, or determinate meanings" (12). From his remarks on *Hamlet* (15 and n. 12), I infer that expressive activity, for him, primarily involves choices regarding structure, language, and meter (or, as I argued in respect to the composition of the *libellus*, the arrangement of poems in a book). To give one obvious illustration, surviving first and second drafts of poems by authors such as Keats reveal the operations of critical judgment—words crossed out and substitutions made, whole lines displaced, meter altered; the process would be the same whether the unsuitable word was rubbed away with the blunt end of a stylus or excised with the "delete" key.

48. My deepest thanks to one of the Press readers for calling my attention to these two books and to their implications for my own methods of working with texts.

49. Nappa (2001: 142–47) persuasively construes poem 42 as an allegory of the “vicissitudes of reception” (147). In remaining unaffected by the taunts of Catullus’ hendecasyllabics, the woman, as audience, forces him to modify their content: the author thus shows himself vulnerable to the reactions of his readers, who ultimately control meaning. Accordingly, this poem stands at the opposite pole from the hyper-masculine poem 16, where the speaker threatens to impose his intended meaning upon the bodies of Furius and Aurelius; cf. poem 25, in which poetic invective is figured as lashes that will “inscribe” (*conscribillent*, 11) a message of ignominy on the pathic thief Thallus. Wray, on the other hand, cites 42 as a prime example of verse posing an “ethical problem of Catullan aggression” (127), and even draws a parallel, implicitly, with the contemporary use of malicious gossip to control female behavior in Andalusian Spain (132–33); but he neglects to consider the implications of the fact that, in this poem, verbal aggression and shaming tactics patently do not achieve their objective.

50. On the interlocutor as a discursive phenomenon in the Catullan corpus, see Evrard-Gillis, who treats it as a distancing device; Adler 27–41, who considers it a vehicle of self-revelation; Pedrick 1986, who believes it preempts audience response and disposes readers to accept the speaker’s words; and Greene, who suggests that use of multiple speaking voices, all facets of a polysemous subject, “dramatizes the fragmenting effects of amatory experience and reveals paradoxes that inhere in erotic discourse” (2). Lack of agreement about the basic function of the interlocutor indicates that its operations warrant closer examination.

51. Sweet presents a compelling argument for the existence of contradictory attitudes toward the addressees, explaining it as a product of the cathartic operations of the text.

52. Naturally, this imaginary student could be a “her.” Since the monograph author is female, however, making the addressee female as well seems superfluous.

53. The present paragraph is greatly indebted to Steig 17–38, whose explanatory model of motives for interpretation I find extremely persuasive.

54. Forming a relation of “intersubjectivity” with a work of art may have further outcomes. In categorizing the essential functions performed during the interpretive process, Altieri defines the experience of assuming the role of addressee, becoming the “you” to whom the text speaks, as “perhaps the most important and certainly the most ignored” of the various positions taken by the reader, and argues that entering into “intimate relations with the text (or person) where questions of the quality of response and commitment to the material interpreted replace those of validity and truth” (306) then permits what is substantially an exchange of dialogue and allows the artwork to exert a claim upon us.

Notes to Chapter 1

1. See Van Sickle 1981 for Meleager’s use of this scheme in his *Garland* and its probable influence upon later poetry collections, including that of Catullus. Gutzwiller 1997 offers a more detailed treatment of Meleagrian editorial patterning. Wiseman 1974: 60 pronounces ring-composition Catullus’ most ubiquitous structuring device, observable in book arrangements as well as in the “enclosing” word order of single lines and the construction of individual poems.

2. For discussion of the relationship between 65 and 116, see E. A. Schmidt 1973: 233; Forsyth 1977a; Dettmer 1983; Wiseman 1985: 183–85; King 383–87.

3. Although it may be the *lectio difficilior*, the Veronensis’ reading *tegam* is ill-suit-

ed to a context that obviously requires the speaker to promise he will always keep his brother's memory alive.

4. Mss. readings differ (*amitha* O, *amicta* GR). Despite Németh's objections, Thomson (1997) *ad loc.* believes Camps' "ingenious suggestion" *contorto . . . evitamus amictu* "has a good deal of merit" and prints it in the apparatus with the notation *fortasse recte*. I would add that, in a self-reflexively programmatic poem concerned with a literary dispute (see Németh 25 and 29–30), *amictus* might suggest not only a garment wrapped around the left arm as a kind of shield but also the parchment wrapper (*membrana*) of a *libellus*, which protects the contents.

5. Beck (53–56) challenges the perceived connection between 65 and 116 and subsequently (308–13) denies that poem 65 served to introduce an elegiac *libellus*. I hope the close reading of both texts provided here will confirm their intimate relationship and establish the programmatic function of the latter.

6. The aim of the compositional exercise would presumably be obvious to the rhetorically trained Hortalus. On the practice of translation from Greek as a means of developing expressive facility and precision in Latin, consult Cic. *de Orat.* 1.155; Sen. *Controv.* 9.1.13–14; Quint. *Inst.* 10.5.2–11; as a stimulus to creativity, see further Pliny *Ep.* 7.9.2, *praeterea imitatione optimorum similia inveniendi facultas paratur* ("besides, by imitation of the best authors a similar ease of invention is acquired"). Discussion of these passages in Seele 76–78.

7. The *recusatio* is commonly believed to originate with Callimachus' alleged repudiation of contemporary epic poetry in his *Aetia* prologue (fr. 1 Pfeiffer). Cameron's sustained challenge to standard readings of Callimachus' poem as an attack upon epic has crucial implications for the deployment of the *recusatio* in Augustan poetry (see esp. ch. XVIII, "Vergil and the Augustan *Recusatio*"). Although I grant that Cameron's arguments require some reconsideration of the ways in which the Augustan poets use the *recusatio*, Catullus' objectives in appropriating this literary form are quite different from theirs, as I will argue below.

8. Syndikus 1990: 194–95 provides a good capsule account of the periodic structure of the poem. For the effects of separative word patterning within individual lines, see Van Sickle 1968: 500–504; on its use of metaphor as an expressive medium, the definitive study is Witke 1968: 13–27.

9. On Callimachus' *Ibis*, see Watson 1991: 121–33; Ovid's reference to it in his own Latin version (*Ib.* 449–50) encapsulates the nasty spirit of the original. For personal abuse in the *Iambi*, including likely obscenity, consult Clayman 58–61.

10. Wray (188–96) contends that poem 116 contrasts Archilochus and Callimachus as "code models" of hypermasculine iambic aggression and delicate sensitivity, respectively; but his efforts to explain away the acerbity of Callimachus' own invective verse fail to convince me.

11. Wiseman 1979: 168, developed at greater length in Wiseman 1987: 338–39. On the activities of bankers and businessmen from Italy in this area during the 50s B.C.E., see Magie I.254–58.

12. If the elegiac lament contained in *P.Lit.Lond.* 64 (fr. 27a–b Lightfoot) is correctly attributed to Parthenius, it may have furnished both a model for Catullus' own laments on his brother (Lightfoot 173 observes the similar theme of burial far from home at 27a.5) and a parallel for the motif of locating the grave near that of a hero of the Trojan War: at 27a.7 the remains are apparently "laid upon the Achillean rocks," Ἀχιλλείων θῆκεν ἐπὶ σκοπέλῳ, possibly a reference to the monument of Achilles at Sigeum.

13. For the topography of the Rhoetean coast, see Cook 77–90. Two cemeteries with Roman burials were discovered in the vicinity: one, found by the nineteenth-cen-

tury excavator Frank Calvert, near the site of the early (archaic and classical) citadel of Rhoeteum and the other, much more extensive, at a settlement that Cook identifies with Hellenistic Rhoeteum, located approximately 2 km from the existing tumulus of Ajax. The latter cemetery seems the more likely resting place of Catullus' brother.

14. Suggested persuasively by Janan 126–27. It is worth noting, however, that Catullus also shows the relationship of father-figure and son as no less nurturing: a two-year-old boy rocked to sleep in his father's arms (17.12–13); baby Torquatus stretching out his arms to his father and smiling (61.209–13); Aegeus' tragic love for his son Theseus (64.212–50); the simile of the old man and his grandson and heir, to be studied later (68.119–24); and, most perplexingly, the speaker's comparison of his love for Lesbia to that of a father for his grown sons and sons-in-law (72.3–4). Mothers in Catullus, except in contexts of mourning, are otherwise seen closely bonded with daughters, as in the marriage poems (61.56–59; 62.20–24), Ariadne's departure from home (64.118–19), or Lesbia's sparrow pictured as a girl in her mother's lap (3.6–8). The friction evoked in 65 between parent and child of the same sex (Telamon and Teucer, the embarrassed girl and her mother in the final simile) is therefore unusual.

15. At E. *Hel.* 87–104 Teucer recounts much the same story, but claims he was exiled because he did not die together with Ajax.

16. The ms. reading here is uncertain. In my translation I adopt the rendering of the phrase found in Sutton and Rackham's Loeb edition.

17. A citation from Pacuvius in a later grammarian (*ap.* Non. 506M), plausibly assigned to this scene in *Teucer*, raises the possibility that Telamon, in rejecting Teucer's explanation for the supposed loss of Eurysaces in the storm that overwhelmed the Achaean fleet, may have compared the narrative he had just heard to the fabrications of poets: *ubi poetae pro sua parte falsa conficta canant qui causam humilem dictis ampliant* ("when poets, to the best of their feigned ability, sing false things and elaborate a petty case with words"). If this attack on poetry was indeed spoken by Telamon, it would provide further reason for the speaker of poem 65 to feel some emotional identification with Teucer.

18. The question of whether the principal speaker of the *Tusculans*, conventionally identified as "M." in modern editions, voices the personal philosophical opinions of the author is a vexed one. I refer to him as "Cicero" because his attitudes toward literature, with which I am solely concerned, seem close to those that Cicero himself articulates privately, e.g., in his correspondence.

19. In a celebrated passage of the *pro Sestio* (120–22), Cicero relates how the tragic actor Aesopus performed his lines so as to turn the production in which he was appearing into political allegory. References to a character's unjust exile were understood and applauded by the theater-goers as allusions to Cicero's banishment; on Cicero's extended report of the occasion, in which he assimilates himself to that tragic figure, see Leach (2000: 387–90). According to the Bobbio scholiast (*ad Cic. Sest.* 120), the play was Accius' *Eurysaces*, still another drama concerned with the fortunes of Telamon's house, and Leach suggests (389–90) that the consul Lentulus Spinther, editor of the *ludi* and a staunch supporter of Cicero's recall, chose that particular play for its perceived relevance to topical events.

20. Jocelyn 1967: 394 remarks that the lines would fit equally well into Pacuvius' *Teucer*. Yet the number of other times Cicero mentions Ennius' tragedies in the third book of the *Tusculans* makes the *Telamo* the more likely source.

21. Sen. *Polyb.* 11.2–3 cites this speech as an instance of wise and courageous preparation for the inevitability of death.

22. Generally assigned to Pacuvius' *Teucer*; the Greek version of the line (πατρὶς γὰρ ἔστι πᾶσ' ἴν' ἂν πράττη τις εὖ) is preserved at Ar. *Pl.* 1151.

23. Cf. Heinze *ad Carm.* 1.7.21: "Das von Cicero Tusc. V 108 daraus zitierte Wort des Teucer . . . paßt in die Stimmung des horazischen Teucer, dessen Ethos dem Drama entstammen wird."

24. I discuss this simile at greater length in the following chapter (pp. 55–57 below).

25. Here is an instance where Jauss' "horizon of expectations" (see above, pp. xxxi–xxxii) comes into play: whatever associations Catullus' reference to Rhoeteum might have summoned up at an earlier or later time, the fact that stage adaptations of the Telamon myth were so frequently produced during this period would ensure that a reading audience was likely to think first of Ajax' story. I will follow the same principle in the third and fourth chapters when I interpret mentions of individuals in Catullus' epigrams with regard to political events in the 50s B.C.E. that would have been on everyone's mind.

26. Horace employs even more *biographèmes* than Catullus but invests them with so much ethical weight that they lose their capacity to affect the reader intimately.

27. The literary and symbolic associations of this incident have been surveyed frequently. See, among others, Brenk 1983 and 1987 and Clauss.

28. Skinner 1984: 141. Add that the reader familiar with other Catullan poems might well infer, from the evidence of cc. 4, 36 and 46, that the speaker had actually visited Rhamnus and seen the cult statue on his journey back from Bithynia.

29. On the basic story-type and its variants, see Fontenrose.

30. See, for example, Wiseman 1969: 18–20, who argues for the Procne-Tereus version on the grounds of its ready association with the theme of "doomed marriage" running through the *carmina maiora*. For interesting remarks on *contaminatio* in the context of intertextuality, consult Hinds 141–42.

31. Fitzgerald 193–94 brilliantly analyzes the self-reflexive implications of each alternative.

32. Laursen proposes a mechanical, strained exegesis of the relationship between the *illustrans*, or figure, and the *illustrandum*, or items in the main text.

33. The claim that details in Aristaenetus' version of the story establish Catullus' dependence upon Callimachus, first argued at length in Daly, is reaffirmed by Hunter. See, in addition, the observation of Kenney *ad Ov. Ep.* 21.109.

34. In Greek lyric, the quince has both nuptial and erotic associations. Cf. Stesich. 187 and Ibyc. 286.1–2 PMG; further discussion in Trumpf. On Latin *malum*, "apple," applied as a generic term to "quince," consult OLD s.v. *malum* 2 and Plin. *Nat.* 15.11.

35. Arnott concedes that Aristaenetus alters or conflates sources and regularly omits "insalubrious" details. Nevertheless, he often "plagiarises *verbatim* or with minor amendments phrases, sentences, even paragraphs" (197).

36. Wray (200 and n. 94) plausibly suggests that the intertextual element signaling Catullus' and Ovid's dependence on Callimachus is not the apple but the pointed allusion to the striking description of the girl's blush.

37. Kenney 229; cf. LSJ II.1.

38. Hinds 25 identifies the case of a rare word or expression in one passage that picks up a corresponding rarity in an earlier passage as "an unequivocal marker of allusion." For another "designed ambiguity" in the same passage of Aristaenetus, again presumably taken directly from Callimachus, see Arnott 207–8.

39. Commentators cite as a parallel for this sense of *sponsus* Hor. *Ep.* 1.2.28, where it is applied disparagingly to Penelope's suitors. A better match, I would say, is Ov. *Am.*

2.1.5, *me legat in sponsi facie non frigida virgo* ("let the not inelegant/not prudish virgin read me in her lover's presence").

40. In magical rites as well as literature apples were employed as aphrodisiac charms, and Near Eastern ritual texts offer parallels for this two-step process of presentation and acceptance of the fruit: see Faraone 235–36.

41. Barton 215: "In the man or woman who blushed the very weakness revealed the strength of the blusher's commitment to social bonds. It was a confession of subordination that cemented society." On the emotional intensity of *pudor* in aristocratic Roman society, and the correlation between *pudor* and blushing, see further Kaster 1997, esp. 7–8.

42. The concluding allusion to Callimachus' *Acontius and Cydippe* carries extra metaliterary weight if, with Rosenmeyer, we regard this tale as a parable of writing, celebrating the control exerted over the reading audience by an author: see esp. 12–17. Rosenmeyer's interpretation has the advantage of explaining the elegy's remarkable appeal for Roman neoteric poets.

43. A good discussion of the leading theme of poetic rivalry in the Catullan corpus, especially in the form of epistolary exchanges, may now be found in Wray 88–109, who plausibly classifies poems 13 and 30 as challenges conveyed by means of a letter, on the model of poems 38 and 50. See further Krostenko 176–85 on aestheticism as a dominant mode of social competition in the late Republic.

44. Ov. Tr. 2.441–42; Gel. 19.9.7; Plin. Ep. 5.3.5. For discussion and further references, see Courtney 230–32, who rejects the idea that the addressee of Catullus 65 could be the son of the consul of 69 B.C.E., since it is uncertain that the younger Hortensius bore his father's cognomen.

45. Habinek 88–102 investigates the Roman appropriation of writing, especially poetry, during this period as a strategy for reinforcing cultural hegemony.

46. W. J. Tatum 1997: 489–94. Cf. Citroni 99–100, who detects "un deferente omaggio" in Catullus' posture.

47. Zetzel 1982: 88 suggests that "the choice of addressee is not necessarily a function of the relationship between the poet and the person whose name is in the vocative, but can be seen as a correlate of both the subject and the style of the poem."

48. On the social inferiority acknowledged in poems 28 and 47, see Skinner 1979; cf. George for the uncertainty of Catullus' position in 44, together with W. J. Tatum's observations on the status of P. Sestius (1997: 494–95). See further Skinner 2001.

49. On the prosopography of Gellius, see below, pp. 90–91; the quotation is from W. J. Tatum 1997: 499.

50. Thomson (1997) *ad loc.* remarks that this expression, "the thought of the mind," is close to an Epicurean technical term: the *animus* is the seat of consciousness and feeling, located in the breast, while *mens* designates its operations.

51. Catullus' contemporary, the Epicurean philosopher Philodemus, client of L. Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus (cos. 58 B.C.E.) and himself a practicing poet, championed the thesis that the production of poetry is a rational process whose products in turn must be evaluated on a rational basis. This tenet underlies his objections to both moralist and euphonist definitions of good poetry in the fifth book of his treatise *On Poems*. Its clearest articulation occurs in *PHerc.* 1676 col. xii [i] 19–24, where he appears to be in agreement with an opponent who defines the poet's task as the selection (*eklegein*) of appropriate diction and the purposeful arrangement of it so as to make the "thought" (*noêma*) or content clear (I follow the reading of the text provided by Asmis 1995: 156–57). On Philodemus' poetic theory, see further Asmis 1991 and Janko 3–10. Belief in Catullus' social contact with Philodemus rests on two pieces of

evidence: the apparently disparaging reference to a “Socraton” who is a dependent of Piso in poem 47, and the structural similarities, indicative of parody, between Philodemus’ dinner invitation to Piso (*Anth. Pal.* 11.44 = G.-P. 23, Sider 27) and Catullus’ mock invitation to Fabullus, poem 13. While the links are slight, they allow for the likelihood of acquaintance, though probably not intimacy (Sider 1997: 23–24).

52. So, for example, Macleod 1973: 307, who points out that mimicry of the opponent’s style is a standard component of literary polemic.

53. Still, Wiseman’s identification of Catullus with the “Valerius” cited as a contemporary author of mimes by Cicero at *Fam.* 7.11.2 (January, 53 B.C.E.) and also with the “Catullus” attested as a mime writer at, for example, *Mart.* 5.30.3 and *Juv.* 8.185–86, 13.110–11 (further *testimonia* in Wiseman 1985: 258–59) does not depend wholly on his reading of poem 116. In other respects it is, if not absolutely convincing, at least plausible. Wiseman’s best piece of evidence, though he does not make as much of it as he might have, is Cicero’s casual mention of *sodalem nostrum Valerium*. Despite the rather vague expression, Cicero expects his correspondent, C. Trebatius Testa, to know precisely who is meant. Although called *sodalis*, “associate,” the man is referred to by *nomen* alone, which, in an informal context, marks him as farther down the social scale than the speaker (Adams 1978: 149–51); moreover, Cicero is observed to display an “impressive consistency” (*ibid.*, 156) in pointedly avoiding use of the more respectful *cognomen* when at pains to distance himself from the person being discussed. *Sodalis* must therefore be sarcastic. In view of the poet’s habitual application of this term to close friends, particularly in the context of shared military experiences (10.29 [Cinna]; 12.13 and 47.6 [Veranius and Fabullus]; 30.1 [his false friend Alfenus]; 35.1 [his fellow-poet Caecilius]; less certainly, although the supplement is widely accepted, 95.9 [Cinna again]), it is arguable that Cicero, writing to someone on Caesar’s staff in Gaul, pinpoints the specific Valerius he has in mind by a derisive reference to Catullan usage.

54. Thus Wills 20 categorizes the failure of –s to make position in Catullus’ line as “part of a specific marker of a parody” of the passage from the *Annales*.

55. For the notion that Catullus is expressing himself in an un-Callimachean way, I am indebted to Macleod 1973: 306–7, although, as remarked above, he himself locates invective at the pole of opposition to Callimacheanism and postulates that Catullus simply “chooses to ignore” Callimachus’ *Ibis*.

56. W. J. Tatum 1997: 500, who bolsters his case for political connotations with Wiseman’s claim (1995b: 129–50) that the legend of Remus was inherently topical, conceived as a parable of relations between patricians and plebeians.

57. Cf. *Cic. Off.* 3.41, where Romulus is condemned for sacrificing *pietas* and *humanitas* to personal advantage, using the matter of the wall as his pretext (*causa*). Discussing this passage, Bannon 164 remarks that “Romulus’ failure is the failure of the civil wars, the failure of Romans to sustain the *mos maiorum* and to treat each other as citizens and brothers.”

58. Voss’ conjecture *magnanimi* is to be preferred to the humanist reading *magnanimos*: see Jocelyn 1979: 87.

59. Approaching the fraternal laments (65–66, 68a–b, 101) as an interconnected group, and juxtaposing them with others in which the poet calls attention to his provincial origins (17, 39, 67), Fitzgerald 185–211 discerns anxieties over a “conflicted” cultural identity—Catullus’ position as a “Roman poet from Transpadane Gaul with Alexandrian affiliations”—implicated in the opposition of Verona to Rome but subsumed beneath the speaker’s immediate feelings of bereavement. Fitzgerald’s per-

ception receives support from Habinek 94–100, who suggests that in dedicating his *libellus* to his fellow countryman Cornelius Nepos the poet reveals his sympathies with an Italian, rather than exclusively Roman, political and historical perspective.

60. Konstan 1977; for an opposed, wholly apolitical reading of 64, see Jenkyns 85–150.

61. What I have in mind when I speak of a putative “failure” of Callimachean poetics should become evident later, but at present let me mention one possible case where its defects might be perceived. The moralizing close of poem 64 has been labeled a blemish; Jenkyns (147–49) is unforgiving about its apparent want of conviction, lack of focus, and “easy clichés about degeneracy.” I wonder, however, if the jarring change in tone and register in lines 382–408 is a kind of Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt*, a tactic used to estrange the reader from her immersion in the opulent, sensuous narrative, the better to encourage logical consideration of the underlying thought. I argue below that in poem 68a and several of the Lesbia epigrams, prosaic diction, awkward syntax, and harsh metrical effects are “antipoetic” devices conveying meanings that cannot be adequately expressed through heightened language, and the same result could be sought at the end of 64. If so, the shortcoming of Callimacheanism, in Catullus’ view, might well be its prioritization of the aesthetic, which allowed it to serve an intellectual coterie as a vehicle of imaginative escape during the last years of the Republic, but which poorly equipped it to address disconcerting social issues. (My implied reader is welcome to take that hypothesis as a point of departure for his doctoral thesis, if someone else doesn’t get to it first.)

62. It might be objected that Cicero’s opinion on the matter of poetic truth would hardly have any bearing on Catullus’ position (if any) on the same question, in view of the problematic treatment of the orator in poem 49. Yet if the rhetoric of that poem has in fact been carefully designed (as Selden 1992: 464–67 contends) to permit the coexistence of two wholly coherent but mutually incompatible readings, making it impossible to decide whether Catullus’ apparent flattery is genuine or insulting, that in itself would comprise a demonstration of the elusiveness of artistic meaning. From the evidence of poem 49, we cannot determine the author’s real feelings toward Cicero, but we may be justified in presupposing that he was very much aware of the potential deceptiveness of poetic language.

63. On the meaning of the term *cantor* here, see W. Allen 13–14. If it has theatrical associations, as Allen believes, it would certainly be derogatory, since professional stage performers were *infames*, “without honor” (C. Edwards 1997). We should probably not assume that Cicero, writing in 45 B.C.E., had Catullus himself in mind. Those he mentions seem, however, to be a distinct group professing common aesthetic tenets. For discussion of that point, see esp. Lyne 1978: 167.

64. In addition (*Div.* 2.133), Cicero believes Euphoriion inordinately dense compared with Homer: *ille vero nimis etiam obscurus Euphoriion, at non Homerus. uter igitur melior?*

65. See also Lyne (1978: 185), who describes him as “a kind of extreme version of Callimachus . . . deviousness manifesting itself in mannered obscurity of style and [his italics] highly exotic, off-beat content.” Watson (1982: 106–10) denies Euphoriion’s penchant for emotionalism, but he bases his view of the poet’s narrative style on the surviving fragments of the curse-poems—a genre that specializes in succinct and cryptic allusions to recondite myths. Interest in the latter genre does not preclude expansive treatment of emotional themes elsewhere; witness Ovid.

66. The myths of Harpalyce and Apriate were briefly recounted in Euphoriion’s curse-poem *Thrax* as instances of misfortunes wished on the addressee, like the con-

cise mythic allusions in Ovid's *Ibis*. In the papyrus fragments of the *Thrax*, Harpalyce's story (SH 413.12–16) was preceded or followed by that of Tereus (SH 414.13), which is strikingly similar, while Apriate's (SH 415.12–18 or 19) was one of a series of ill-fated marriages.

67. Lightfoot observes that the sentence implies both "a current vogue in Rome for poetry with an erotic, mythological content, which might appear in either metre" and an assumption that "hexameters and elegiacs are the sort of metres that one would use for this subject-matter" (369).

68. Wiseman (1974: 52–56) suggests that the creation of the "new poetry" in its strict sense was the collaborative effort of Parthenius and Cinna, and the publication of Cinna's epic in 56–55 B.C.E. marked the real opening shot of the neoteric revolution. Catullus' subjective investment in the moral dimension of human suffering is, he believes, atypical. Cf. Watson 1982, who draws convincing parallels between the linguistic and lexicographical practices of Euphorion and Cinna.

69. On the contrast between elegy, characterized as *mollis*, "soft," and gendered as feminine, and traditional military epic, which is viewed as "hard," *durus*, and aligned with the masculine, see Kennedy 1993: 31–33 and Wyke 1994: 119. In 16.6–11, Catullus describes his *versiculi* as *molliculi* capable of inciting desire in the "hard loins" (*duros . . . lumbos*) of readers.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. Throughout this monograph, I assume that 68a and 68b are discrete works, closely related but situated at distinct moments in time, on the analogy of poems 2 and 3. My reasons for taking this position should emerge in the course of discussion. For prior argument on this point, see Skinner 1972.

2. Dettmer 1997: 130 points out, for example, that poems 65 and 68a, though parallel in terms of genre and function (both are *recusationes* serving as cover letters) are inversely related insofar as each addressee is given what the *other* desired: the correspondent of 65, who apparently wanted an original poem, receives a translation from the Greek, and the correspondent of 68a, who wanted a translation or adaptation of a Greek original, is sent an experimental poem.

3. King's reading of these poems as a "Callimachean" sequence is endorsed by Arkins 1999: 74.

4. Kroll 196: "mit der deutlichen Absicht, den Stil des folgenden Gedichtes nachzuahmen."

5. Macleod 1983: 191–92; see my own analysis of the poem later in this chapter.

6. On the inversions of the Callimachean aesthetic in the opening images of 68b, see Claus.

7. Ross 1969: 121–27 identifies metrical differences between 65–66 and the succeeding elegies. He notes that the relative frequency of elisions is much lower in the first two poems. (In addition, the percentage of elisions in 68.1–40 is itself higher than those in both 67 and 68.41–160, reinforcing the contention that 68 was originally two separate poems.) Catullus also permits elision across the halfway point in the pentameter in 67 and 68, but not in 65 or 66. For another discussion of these phenomena, see Duhigg 61–62 and 65, and cf. my own further remarks in ch. 3, below.

8. Vermeule 4. The distinct quality of the Greeks' writing about death, she adds, ensured that their dead were peculiarly active as mythic models for the living (6–7).

9. Explaining the cryptic phrase "man is the dream of a shade" (Pi. P. 8.95–96), Nagy proposes that "the occasion of victory in a mortal's day-to-day lifetime is that

singular moment when the dark insubstantiality of an ancestor's shade is translated, through its dreams, into the shining life-force of the victor in full possession of victory, radiant with the brightness of Zeus" (195–96).

10. See Newman 234–37 and Janan 117–19, 140–41. I discuss their reading of the text in more detail below, pp. 37–38 and n. 23.

11. These lines are both fragmentary and syntactically confused; detailed discussion in Kambylis 82–85. However, I follow Hopkinson's paraphrase (*ad loc.*): ἵνα ἀείδω ἔδων τὴν μὲν δρόσον, πρῶκιον εἶδαρ, ἐκ δίης ἡέρος, ἵνα δὲ τὸ γῆρας αὖθι ἐκδύοιμι.

12. M. J. Edwards takes Callimachus' refusal to cater to the multitude a step too far when he argues (1994: 809–12) that the poet's fastidiousness compels him to forego the privilege of expressing the collective opinion of the community and so abjure the hope of immortality. Callimachus does speak for a community, albeit an exclusive one; and Catullus, in affirming the aesthetic standards of the *poetae novi*, does the same.

13. Thomson (1997) *ad* 1.9, when defining *patrona virgo* as "the poet's Muse," remarks, "The notion of *clientela*, with the consequent duty of *fides* (cf. 34.1. *in fide*), explains why C. can describe a good poet as *pious* (16.5) and a bad one as *impious* (14.7)."

14. Most notably the onomatopoeic effect of *argutatio inambulatioque* (6.11), the brilliant hendecasyllabic line describing the "creaking and wobbling" of Flavius' much-abused bed (Tracy).

15. So Wiseman 1969: 17–18; Block 50–51, who believes that "this grouping stands as a lasting monument to Catullus' brother"; cf. King 384.

16. See Gutzwiller 1992: 362–69 for the invention of the story of the offering's disappearance and its use in promoting the political aims of Ptolemy III Euergetes and Berenice II; on Callimachus' role as court poet and his consequent involvement with these events, cf. 373. Koenen 89–90 argues that the poem, through its urbane wit, propagates the notion of divine kingship and hints that Berenice's eventual deification is foreshadowed in the catasterism of the Lock. Selden 1998: 326–54 proposes an even more ambitious ideological program for the elegy; by fusing the Hellenic motif of metamorphosis with Egyptian kingship lore, it "attempts to articulate the whole range of Ptolemaic experience, so as to epitomize its essence: an eccentric angle on the world in which instability, translation, distance, and referral constitute the recurrent, if inevitably disruptive, standards of significance" (354).

17. On the structure and independent publication of Books III and IV of the *Aetia*, see Cameron 104–13. While the *Lock* apparently circulated as a separate elegy in POxy 2258, the papyrus is extremely late (seventh century C.E.). Furthermore, lack of any counterpart to 66.79–88 in that text creates notorious difficulties for those who believe an ancestor of the ms. served as Catullus' prototype. See below, p. 46 and nn. 43–44.

18. Koenen 94–95 and n. 164, where he observes that Catullus could have employed the word *crinis* if he had wished to preserve the original gender of the tress.

19. On Catullus' attempts to duplicate prosodic features of Callimachus' elegy, see Clausen 1970: 85–90; more detailed comparisons between the texts in the commentary of Marinone and in Syndikus 1990: 202–25. Bing points out, however, that later papyrus finds have *not* confirmed reconstructions based on the assumption that Catullus translated his model faithfully. For intensification of emotional feeling in 66 through rhetorical elaboration, cf. Putnam.

20. This unusual inversion of the standard convention by which the poet requests that the Muse inform him of events has been frequently noted. Thomson (1997) *ad*

loc. endorses Baehrens' justification (504): the matter is so personal that the Muses themselves cannot be expected to know it.

21. Wills 143–44 associates the triple mention of *Troia* in 68.88–91 with Nestor's use of ἔνθα ("there") in listing those who died at Troy (*Od.* 3.108–12), noting that, just as Nestor's roll-call ends with a personal loss, that of his own son, "so Catullus' climax is the death of his brother there."

22. Tuplin 132 observes that "all other metaphorical uses of *barathrum*/βάραθρον have sinister connotations of darkness, error, punishment and destruction"; he provides references in Appendix II (138–39).

23. So Janan 134–35; cf. Newman 228–40. Although the two critics employ very different methodologies, each points to the Platonic reassignment of the female reproductive role to the "pregnant" mind of the male philosopher or poet (*Symp.* 209a–d, discussed above, pp. 31–32) to substantiate the claim that Catullus depicts the making of verse as the equivalent of biological paternity.

24. Wills 369 remarks on the relative infrequency of using the connective *atque* more than twice in the same line.

25. In poem 96, the speaker associates himself with the anguish expressed by his friend Calvus in an elegiac lament for the prematurely dead Quintilia: through such expression of longing, he says, "we requicken old loves and weep for friendships once abandoned" (*veteres renovamus amores / atque olim missas flemus amicitias*, 3–4). Here again Catullus appears to articulate his belief in art's redemptive properties—but this, as we will see, is an equivocal pronouncement. See below, pp. 116–17.

26. For the factor of allusivity in Callimachus' impersonation of the Lock, see Gutzwiller 1992: 373–85.

27. So Putnam 227, the earliest to draw a parallel between the new brides Berenice and Laodamia in 68b; Wiseman 1969: 20–22; Clausen 1970: 94; Kidd 41–42; Puelma I.233–35; most recently, Dettmer 1997: 139–41; Griffith 52–53, who connects Berenice's offering with Achilles' hair-sacrifice for the dead Patroclus, and Thomson 1997: 448, who argues for the application of 66.22, *fratris cari flebile discidium* ("tearful separation from a dear brother"), to Catullus' situation.

28. Fear 250–51 observes the bathos in combining the diminutive *epistolium* with the overstatement *conscriptum . . . lacrimis*.

29. E.g., Quinn 1973a *ad loc.*: "These lines pick up, with more than a hint of sad irony, the extravagant language used by Mallius." Cf. Coppel 105–7; Sarkissian 8.

30. Levine 1976: 66–67; Sarkissian 9 ("a dramatization of the plight of the typical lover"); H. J. Woodman 101; Fear 246.

31. On the assumption that the letter was a piece of correspondence actually received by the poet, Coppel 108–9 studies its stylistics, concluding that it was an amalgam of epic diction, neoteric preciosities, and colloquial jargon with a special meaning for Catullus' circle.

32. *Malest, Cornifici, tuo Catullo, / malest, mehercule, et laboriose, / et magis magis in dies et horas* ("Cornificius, it's going badly for your Catullus, it's going badly and laboriously, by Hercules, daily and hourly more and more," 38.1–3). One of the few surviving fragments of Cornificius' epyllion *Glaucus* (fr. 2 Courtney) mentions an attack on centaurs, most likely by their customary opponent Hercules. By invoking the hero's name and punning on *laboriose*, Catullus may allude to a passage in Cornificius' poem.

33. After comparing the petulant language of poem 38 with the still more overwrought diction of poem 30, Wray plausibly concludes that the latter is "again a request for poetic performance that itself takes the form of a poetic performance, this time a considerably more virtuosic and foregrounded performance" (103).

34. Lieberg 1962: 156 correctly explains *hospitis* as an objective genitive and thus a proleptic reference to (M)allius' provision of a house for Catullus and his beloved in 68b.

35. I return to the handling of the correspondent's request in ch. 5 (below, p. 146) to discuss it in the light of the language of aristocratic obligation found in the Lesbia epigrams.

36. See above, p. xxix. Here I would disagree with W. R. Johnson's assertion that in the "I-You" poem addressed to a named recipient the person addressed "is a metaphor for readers of the poem and becomes a symbolic mediator, a conductor between the poet and each of his readers and listeners" (3). Johnson's theory leaves no room for ironic manipulation of the addressee convention.

37. On the ms. tradition of the addressees' names, see Wiseman 1974: 88–90; for a prior history of this solution to the difficulty together with a well-argued defense of it, consult Hubbard 1984: 33 and n. 13.

38. McGinn 180–81 and 240–42 discusses this provision of the *lex Iulia*, noting that jurists later defined the act of materially assisting commission of adultery or *stuprum* by furnishing a venue as a form of criminal pimping or *lenocinium*. The Romans, he adds, "were capable of regarding the liability of accomplices as equal to that of principals" (244). On *stuprum*, see esp. Fantham and C. A. Williams 96–124. The case of the two Petrae is cited as relevant to the interpretation of 68 by Wiseman 1985: 160 and n. 107.

39. Pl. Cur. 35–37: *nemo ire quemquam publica prohibet via; / dum ne per fundum saeptum facias semitam, / dum ted abstineas nupta, vidua, virgine, / iuventute et pueris liberis, ama quidlubet* ("no one forbids anyone to go along a public street, as long as you don't cut a path through a fenced property; if you stay away from the bride, the widow, the virgin, young men, and freeborn boys, love whom you please"). The analogy was doubtless proverbial.

40. Most thoroughly by Sarkissian *passim*; but see also Johnson 159–62; Hubbard 1984 on the speaker's "mystification" (and corresponding "self-demystification" in 68a); Wiseman 1985: 159–64. I discuss this point at greater length in ch. 5, pp. 164–66 below.

41. Richardson 1967: 423–24 identifies the discrepancies between 66 and 67, and likewise between 67 and 68, as particularly troublesome problems.

42. The phrases *iucunda viro* and *iucunda parenti* recall the descriptions of the deflowered girl as *nec pueris iucunda . . . nec cara puellis* ("not pleasing to boys nor dear to girls," 62.47) and of the bride as *cara viro magis et minus . . . invisā parenti* ("more dear to her husband, less odious to a parent," 58) in the epithalamic poem 62; see further Richardson 1967: 425 and Levine 1985: 64–65. Because of the close connection between the house door and the mistress of the house, Hallett believes the *ianua* is to be thought of as itself a *matrona*. But the traits it displays—servility, petulance, garrulousness—are stereotypically those of menials; see Murgatroyd 476–77.

43. Putnam 223–24, comparing the insertion of the second brother-passage in 68b; cf. Hollis 22, who cites in support Lobel's observation (98) that "79–88 are easily separable, and to my taste their equivalent is gladly to be dispensed with."

44. Putnam and Hutchinson 323 believe the *actio* was invented by Catullus; Hollis speculates that it was taken from a related Callimachean elegy on Berenice's marriage.

45. Badian attempts to remove the reference to the Door's "marriage" by reading *est . . . pacta marita*, "a wife was pledged." This emendation removes the taint of scandal from the elder Balbus by making him die before his son arranges the betrothal.

46. Giangrande 86 and Badian argue that the Caecilius of line 9 is Balbus' son; but *tradita nunc sum* would imply that yet another transfer of ownership has taken place.

47. With Mynors, I prefer *attigerit*, the reading of V, to *attigerat*. For the implications of the subjunctive—connoting an inference drawn by the Door—see Giangrande 95 with n. 35.

48. The adjective *prior* would then be used adverbially as the equivalent of *prius*; so Thomson 1997 *ad loc.*

49. Representative believers in an earlier husband include Kroll, Quinn 1973a, Badian, Levine 1985, and most recently Thomson 1997; Lenchantin, Copley 1949, Richardson 1967, Giangrande, Macleod 1983, and Syndikus 1990: 230 deny his existence.

50. One could suppose that the woman's relatives were trying to pass her off (*fer-tur*, 19) as a virgin to the younger Balbus at the time of her first marriage. The elder Balbus' alleged liaison with her would accordingly have to have occurred without his son's knowledge, before the wedding and in her parental home. Such a scenario appears to be contradicted by *pater illusi gnati violasse cubile / dicitur*—assuming the statement is to be taken all that literally.

51. Macleod 1983: 189 correctly identifies this as the figure of *dubitatio*, “where the speaker wavers between two versions or explanations of a fact”; he deems the motives given here “equally unflattering.” Rhetorically, however, the second reason is assigned both greater weight and more ignominy by its very placement. Cf. Quint. *Inst.* 9.3.88.

52. Quinn 1973a: 372–73 conjectures that the woman tried to get this last lover to marry her “by pretending she was with child by him”; but surely she would not have initiated such a lawsuit while already married to someone else. For a survey of other complicated speculations, see Levine 1985: 66 n. 23.

53. Macleod 1983:190, citing *ad Her.* 4.63 for the device of *effictio*.

54. Wiseman's clever proposal of a C. Cornelius *Longus*, known from an inscription discovered in Verona (1987: 342 and n. 38), is accordingly ruled out.

55. Although it is worth recalling that Ovid at *Tr.* 2.429–30 cites Catullus' verses on the Lesbia affair as an instance of suggestive writing, then adds: *nec contentus ea, multos vulgavit amores, / in quibus ipse suum fassus adulterium est*, “and not content with her, he circulated many love poems in which he himself admitted his own adultery.” While Ovid is patently tendentious here, he was nevertheless a close reader of Catullus: apart from the Aufillena of poems 110 and 111 slandered as a dissolute *matrona*, whom else did he have in mind?

56. Fitzgerald 205–7 considers 67 a burlesque of the *Coma Berenices*. The parallels he traces are attractive, and his suggestion that “the transference of the bride from Brixia to Verona is a parodic counterpart to the translation of the lock in poem 66” (206) is especially neat; but the interview format extends the scope of the parody to Callimachean etiology in general.

57. While ancient poets frequently mention place of birth and familial background in a *sphragis*, they seldom furnish data on personal appearance or disposition. A notable exception is Horace, who in *Ep.* 1.20.24–25 records that he was *corporis exigui, praecanum, solibus aptum, / irasci celerem, tamen ut placabilis essem* (“of short stature, prematurely gray, suited to sunny days, / quick to anger but nonetheless easily soothed”), adding his age (just turned 45) in December 21 B.C.E. The selection of details (height, hair color, temperament) coincides with the information we are given at the end of poem 67. Wills 149–53 observes that the device of epanalepsis (the repetition of a word occurring in an emphatic position in one line at the beginning of a following line) is frequently applied by Catullus' successors to their own places of origin; he cites 67.32–34, *Brixia . . . / Brixia Veronae mater amata meae* (“Brixia . . . Brixia, beloved mother of my Verona”) as a likely earlier example of the practice. One should note that the possessive, strictly speaking, belongs to the Door. Hence the passage

would conform to convention only if the formula were being parodied and the dramatic illusion broken so as to call attention to the performer's extratextual identity. While it has not been accepted by editors, Scaliger's emendation *tuae* did attempt to rationalize that perceived oddity.

58. I am not overlooking the fact that calumny may be a serious concern in a small town, ancient or modern. Wray 129–34 cites suggestive examples of lives ruined by the power of gossip in the rural communities of Andalusian Spain, and Cohen ch. 6 and 7 hypothesizes that public scrutiny was an effective method of social control in classical Athens. However, the implicit standpoint assumed by the script of poem 67 is that of an audience at Rome, which would find the Door's salacious tittle-tattle funny rather than threatening. Indeed, the menace of gossip is itself no small part of the intertextual joke, for the well-read Muse of Callimachus' *Aetia* has now become the town scandalmonger.

59. For the performative aspects of poem 4, see Fredrick; on internal evidence for oral performance in 10, including the revealing presence of a deictic, *huc*, in line 5, see Skinner 2001. We find Horace observing the same authorial practice when he inserts an anecdotal reminiscence of his own moral upbringing at the hands of his father into a manifesto defining the models and formulaic conventions of the satiric genre (S. 1.4.103–31).

60. Thomson (1997) adopts Landor's correction of V's *mira* on the plausible grounds that abbreviations for the adjectives may have been confused.

61. The paradox in Catullus' demand for an *aeternum . . . foedus amicitiae* (109.6) is well summed up by Rubino 291: "The creation of the elegiac *foedus* is dependent on the violation of the real-life *foedus*, and the fact that the beloved has violated that *foedus* and must go on violating it every moment she remains the poet's mistress is what gives the elegiac world much of its peculiar dynamic. The poetic lover is always uncertain of his beloved's fidelity to him, for he knows that *she has already been unfaithful to her husband*: without that unfaithfulness there could be no relationship between the lover and beloved at all" (italics Rubino's).

62. S. Baker's demonstration of this point is widely accepted. Syndikus 1990: 274 argues against it, but his principal argument—which distinguishes between stepping and *stumbling* on the threshold—is quite weak. Heath's radical contention that Lesbia is not depicted as a bride *at all* in 68 forces him to explain away a large amount of contradictory evidence.

63. Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 29 is the definitive *locus* for this belief; Tuplin 117 n. 18 lists corroborating sources. Cf. the advice to the bride in Catul. 61.159–60, *transfer omine cum bono / limen aureolos pedes*, "bear your gold-shod feet across the sill with favorable omen." Fulkerson cites Ep. 13.85–88 (Laodamia recalls Protesilaus tripping in the act of departing for Troy, *pes tuus offenso limine signa dedit*), as evidence that Ovid regarded his source text, Lesbia's footstep in the Catullan passage, as having a sinister meaning.

64. During the wedding procession (*deductio*) to the bridegroom's home, the bride was attended by three boys whose parents were still alive (Fest. 77 and 283 Lindsay; Plin. *Nat.* 1.16, 30.18; Treggiari 166).

65. M. J. Edwards 1991: 73 observes that the allusion to Lesbia as *diva* "reveals her to be as faint and inaccessible as those deities who act with sovereign power upon a world that they are unwilling to befriend."

66. In 58.3, Wiseman (1974: 116–18) infers a "rejection of the family's claims in favour of a liaison which only Catullus' idealizing imagination could turn into a marriage-bond."

67. Above, pp. 11–12.

68. Disappointingly, these fragments do not allow us to reconstruct Laevius' treatment or determine how far Catullus was influenced by it. However, fr. 13, *fac papyrin . . . haec terga habeant stigmata* ("make these papyrus surfaces bear tattoos"), may be echoed at 68.46, *facite haec carta loquatur anus*. Like Catullus, Laevius may be exhorting a Muse to preserve his work. Lieberg 1962: 209–18; Sarkissian 42–44; and Lyne 1998 review other versions of the story. Lefèvre (318–19) proposes that Catullus imitated a Hellenistic account of the myth but furnishes no ancient testimony for such a version.

69. Lyne 1998 follows the account given in Hyg. *Fab.* 103 and 104 and scholia on Aelius Aristides, citing the authority of Nauck 563. For the standard reconstruction, see also Webster 97–98.

70. Almost all critics agree that Catullus adds the motif of punishment for a neglected sacrifice to the Homeric version (e.g., Lieberg 1962: 220–23; Tuplin 117; Sarkissian 44; see now Lyne 1998: 207–8, who proposes that Homer's ἡμιτελής, a much-disputed adjective, was glossed, probably by an unknown Hellenistic poet, as an allusion to a rite (τέλος) left incomplete. Thomas 1978 argued that lines 75–76 refer to the sacrifice of Iphigenia and "merely provide . . . a temporal setting for the marriage of Protesilaus and Laodamia" (177), but this suggestion has not won acceptance; cf. the reply of Van Sickle 1980b.

71. The fragment was edited and published by Haslam in Bowman et al. 18–21; additional supplements by M. L. West 1977, Luppe, and, most recently, Oranje.

72. For a more precise account of the statutory provisions as they affect the characters in the simile, see Gardner 32–34. I have simplified my explanation for the benefit of those less familiar with the legal conditions imposed upon upper-class Roman women (which, of course, would be well known to Catullus' readers).

73. Iser's process of constituting meaning postulates sequentiality (222).

74. Eagleton observes: "The whole point of reading, for a critic like Iser, is that it brings us into deeper self-consciousness, catalyzes a more critical view of our own identities. It is as though what we have been 'reading,' in working our way through a book, is ourselves" (79). From Eagleton's marxist perspective, this account of reading is a closed circle, through which the self-indulgent ideology of the liberal-humanist reader is confirmed. However, nothing in Iser's exposition would impede the possibility that interrogation of routine habits of belief might result in taking political action.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. Wiseman's argument was subsequently endorsed by E. A. Schmidt (1973: 228–34).

2. On the binary design of the *Passer*, see further Skinner 1981: 103–4: "recurrent metrical patterns and rigid thematic complexes set up norms which are then violated by freer treatment of the hendecasyllabic base and more informal, even capricious, groupings of poems." Thomson 1997 finds fault with Heck's argument for planned order because it appears increasingly to falter as it approaches the end of the collection and adds that subsequent studies "induce in those who follow them a similar feeling of *decrescendo*" (6). It is arguable, however, that *decrescendo* is an effect programmed into the polymetric and elegiac *libelli*.

3. "If we look only at the figures (one in four a Lesbia poem), it may seem paradoxical to claim that the Lesbia poems form the really important part, not just of the first group of sixty poems, but of the total of one hundred and thirteen, and to relegate the rest to the status of background. Yet I doubt very much that any critic would

want to deny primacy of importance to the Lesbia poems, at any rate in the two groups of short poems, 1–60 and 69–116” (1972b: 204).

4. Similar objections could be raised against Dion’s division of the epigrams (147–53 and 157) into three groups of sixteen poems (cc. 69–84, 85–100, 101–16), each subdivided into two parts. In particular, it seems inappropriate to disrupt the continuity of poems 70, 72, 75, 85, and 87, which mark distinct stages of a psychological and rhetorical progression (see below, pp. 85–86).

5. Miller’s explanation owes much to Quinn’s influential account of the “Catullan Revolution” (1971 [1959]). He lays particular stress, however, upon the indifference of the *poetae novi* to Roman ideological discourses, political and social values, and traditional means of gaining honor and prestige (1994: 134–37). While I agree that the Catullan persona constantly voices his disillusionment with politics and prizes the private satisfactions of art, love, and friendship above those of *negotia*, this literary self-characterization is not incompatible with avid interest and even actual involvement in public affairs. Cf. the career of Catullus’ friend Licinius Calvus—influential neoteric poet, but also politician, orator, and leading rhetorical theorist. Nappa 2001 (*passim*) makes an excellent case for the integration of aesthetics and social criticism throughout the polymetric collection.

6. For a reassessment of Parthenius’ likely contribution to the neoteric movement at Rome, see now Lightfoot 50–76. Dyer argues, less plausibly, that Parthenius’ pedagogical activities were centered in Transpadane Gaul and even suggests he may have been Catullus’ *grammaticus* (21).

7. Ross (1975: 9) pronounces the Lesbia of the polymetrics “a representation of *urbanitas*”; I would add that the ideal she incarnates not only governs polite social intercourse but possesses an aesthetic and an ethical dimension as well.

8. Holzberg 33–39 argues that the figure of “Lesbia” in the corpus is intended to evoke associations not merely of the celebrated woman poet, the “tenth Muse,” but also of Sappho the whore and tribad in the pseudo-biographical tradition. The latter associations may indeed have been present to a contemporary Roman reader’s mind, but Holzberg overemphasizes them to suit his reading of the poems as primarily comic and erotically provocative—an interpretation of the corpus that likewise, I believe, goes rather too far.

9. Davidson 120–27, 134–36 observes that in classical Athens the *hetaera*—whose profession is itself euphemistic, since the word means simply “friend, companion”—was associated with “notoriously enigmatic, parodic and punning” language, citing the witty exchanges between Socrates and the courtesan Theodote (X. *Mem.* 3.11) as the locus classicus. He notes that the inherent “resistance to closed meaning” in their utterances “provokes efforts to control them, to capture them in images, to capture them in print” (135). Thus the ambiguity of woman’s words not only epitomizes her instability as an object of male desire but also explains her desirability as an object of male representation.

10. Catullus eliminates the final distich of Callimachus’ poem, which alludes to a legendary oracle retold in the *Suda* (s.v. ὑμεῖς ὦ Μεγαρεῖς): when the Megarians sent to Delphi to ask who were the best of the Greeks, assuming that they would hear well of themselves, they were told they were neither third, nor fourth, nor twelfth, “nor at all in the running” (οὐτ’ ἐν λόγῳ οὐτ’ ἐν ἀριθμῷ). The impact of the proverb in its epigrammatic context is wryly dismissive.

11. For the Platonic division between speech and writing, see above, p. xxx. Janan 87 thinks the immediate inspiration for the line is instead a fragment of Sophocles: ὄρκον δ’ ἐγὼ γυναικὸς εἰς ὕδωρ γράφω, “I write a woman’s oaths in water” (fr.

742 Nauck²). It is possible, however, that this is a case of multiple reference in which recollections of both the tragic application of the proverbial saying and Plato's subsequent epistemological pronouncement are being elicited.

12. Fitzgerald 134–39 reads the epigrams that question Lesbia's sincerity (70, 72, 92, and 109) as declarations about the gap between ordinary spoken exchanges and the privileged status of poetic speech, but cautions that the speaker's language turns out to be no less "interested" than Lesbia's (138). Thus, although the image of writing upon water—as opposed to engraving in stone—reminds us of "what poetry cannot do," it also retracts that admission by claiming that "the words spoken before the poem began, and outside its precinct, are unworthy of transcription" (139). My own interpretation, which locates Catullus' critique of heightened language in relationship to the larger political context, owes a considerable debt to Fitzgerald, and particularly to his salutary warning regarding its motivation.

13. Jauss (1989 [1970]: 84–86) identifies allusion to earlier texts as one device for setting the horizon of expectations and rules to be "varied, corrected, changed or just reproduced" and thereby determining reception at the moment of the literary work's appearance.

14. For the obscene pun on *intima*, see Courtney 1993: 306.

15. If *dixit* were an aoristic ("historical") perfect, one would expect a pluperfect subjunctive in the relative clause; thus it is more likely a true perfect with continuing force in the present (see Kühner and Stegmann 178–79). My colleague Frank Romer proposes that this is an instance of *repraesentatio*, in which primary sequence automatically gives, by definition of the true perfect as a present tense, the point of view of the original speaker, the *Zmyrna*, rather than that of the poetic narrator (private communication).

16. In the polymetrics, the author's impulse, or his inability, to direct reception of the text in a certain direction is a recurrent theme. Using very different approaches, recent analyses of poem 16 by Selden 1992: 477–89; Pedrick 1993: 182–87; Fitzgerald 49–52; and Nappa 2001: 45–57 agree in treating anxiety over misapprehension of textual meanings as a focal point of investigation. Similar concerns surface in the (false) modesty of the programmatic poem 1, in 14b, indirectly in the sequence 35 through 37, and quite clearly in poem 42, as Nappa 2001: 142–47 demonstrates (see above, p. xxxv and n. 49).

17. Adler 16–18 observes that Lesbia's present failure to "know" Catullus himself adds further ambiguity to the meaning of *solum nosse Catullum*, imposing a cognitive dimension upon the sexual sense of the infinitive.

18. Pedrick 1986: 204–5 proposes that the interlocutor here is instead an "eavesdropper," or member of the reading audience. That the speaker has been addressing Lesbia directly up until this point makes such an interpretation, though conceivable, less likely.

19. Other treatments of the issue include those of Minyard 1985: 26–28, who defines this terminology as a "civic vocabulary" that the poet appropriates and reconstitutes as a vehicle for expressing private values, and Fitzgerald 117–20, who, after critiquing the positions of Ross, Lyne, and Minyard, pronounces it a "language of aristocratic obligation" divorced from its ordinary context of social duties and reciprocities, and thus illustrative of the artist's solipsistic manipulation of the language he putatively shares with his audience.

20. See Skinner 1997a [1993]: 143–44 and n. 27.

21. Even figurative readings—a recent example is that of Nappa 1999b: 271—seem strained. Hence Kaster declares that the transmitted text "can be retained only

at the cost of offering an interpretation which ventures so far into fancy as to impinge upon the absurd" (1977: 308).

22. Although there are contexts in which *caper* is used as a mere synonym for *hircus*, other passages contrast the two nouns. At Mart. 3.24.5–6 a sacrificial goat is to be castrated *taeter ut immundae carnis abiret odor*, "so that the foul odor of unclean flesh might go away." In this joke the officiant, an Etruscan *haruspex*, is himself castrated by mistake; Martial's punchline *dum iugulas hircum, factus es ipse caper* ("while you slaughter the ram, you yourself are made a wether") patently draws the distinction. It may slyly allude to Vergil's *vir gregis ipse caper*, "the very husband of the flock" (Ecl. 7.7), which, *para prosdokian*, is not a ram but a bellwether. Vergil, incidentally, is taken to task by Gellius (9.9.9–10) for translating Theocritus' *enorchan* ("ram") as *caprum* at Ecl. 9.25; Gellius cites Varro as his authority for the statement *is demum Latine "caper" dicitur, qui excastratus est*. In both of Vergil's ostensibly erroneous uses of *caper*, I suspect we may be missing the joke.

23. Dettmer 1997: 178 rightly notes the significance of the verbal correlation; however, I am not convinced by her proposal to read *quae* (= Lesbia) for *qui* in line 6.

24. Garnsey and Saller 148, citing Sen. Ben. 1.4.2, where exchange of *beneficia* is said to be that which "most especially binds together human society" (*res quae maxime humanam societatem adligat*). On the notion of *officium*, *beneficium*, and *meritum* as tangible expressions of *amicitia*, see Hellegouarc'h ch. 2.

25. Cicero says as much at *Amic.* 26: meritorious deeds given and received (*dandis recipiendisque meritis*) are deemed "rightly belonging to friendship" (*proprium amicitiae*), even though affection is its direct impetus (*amor enim, ex quo amicitia nominata est, princeps est ad benevolentiam coniungendam*). Hellegouarc'h notes that *meritum*, in contrast to the idea of action implicit in *officium* and *beneficium*, "marque le résultat de cette action et la situation qui en résulte pour son auteur" (170).

26. OLD s.v. *officium* 4b, cf. Ter. Eu. 729, *postquam surrexi, neque pes neque mens satis suum officium facit*, "after I have risen, neither foot nor mind performs its proper function" (in the context of drunkenness). Fitzgerald 133 also takes *officium* here as "function," though with a somewhat different import.

27. See Adler's analysis (35–41) of the rhetoric of self-address in 76 and Greene's interpretation of the poem (12–17) as an exchange between two facets of the Catullan *ego*.

28. Syndikus (1987: 22) ascribes this moral dictum to Epicureanism; Powell (200) demonstrates its wider scope. For Cicero's employment of it, see esp. Sen. 9, where it is couched in phrasing strikingly similar to Catullus': *conscientia bene actae vitae multorumque benefactorum recordatio iucundissima est* ("the awareness of a life well conducted and the remembrance of many good deeds is highly pleasant").

29. Vine finds a model for the speaker's paralysis of will in epic accounts of a hero's physical seizure by fear or collapse in death. Arkins 1999: 35 diagnoses his condition as an "obsessional neurosis."

30. The voice uttering the concluding prayer "encompasses the perspectives and the discourses of both [rational] speaker and lover" (Greene 15).

31. Miller 1994: 136; cf. Minyard 1985: 26–29 and Platter 216–19.

32. Brunt's seminal analysis of the large overlap between the affective and the pragmatic, as well as the private and the public, elements of *amicitia*, is fundamental to recent work on the subject; see further Konstan 1997: 122–48.

33. In Sallust's monographs, the growing ascendancy of a pragmatic notion of friendship is reflected in the speeches of leading characters. Soliciting the help of accomplices, Catiline urges that a durable *amicitia* is based upon "wanting and not

wanting the same things" (*idem velle atque idem nolle, ea demum firma amicitia est, Cat.* 20.4) and Memmius tells the Roman people that to "desire, hate, and fear the same things" (*eadem cupere, eadem odire, eadem metuere*) is reckoned "friendship among the good, faction among the wicked" (*inter bonos amicitia, inter malos factio, Jug.* 31.14–15).

34. This is certainly the judgment of Aulus Gellius, who preserves the passage because it is, in his opinion, "not less worthy of constant and repeated reference than philosophers' pronouncements about obligations" (NA 12.4). Observing echoes in later authors, Skutsch proposes that the verses were "presumably given special attention in schools" (1985: 451).

35. Wallace-Hadrill draws a picture "of social relationships in a state of flux and change, seen by participants to suffer from malfunction and abuse, subject to open challenge and attack" (71).

36. On Cicero's personal view of friendship, cf. Brunt, who compares a number of revealing passages from the correspondence expressing similar sentiments (4–6), and Konstan 1997: 130–31.

37. On Sallust's debate between Caesar and Cato as a paradigm of late republican intellectual conflict over ethical terminology and values, see Minyard 1985: 19–22; for analysis of Sallust's theory of linguistic systems and semantic slippage, cf. Sklenář.

38. *Morbus*: see Cic. *Cat.* 1.31, *Att.* 2.20.3. *Pestis*: Cic. *Cat.* 1.11, 1.30; *Dom.* 5, 26, 72; *Sest.* 33, 65, 83, 114.

39. See Skinner 1997b; Nappa 2001: 35–43; and Holzberg 28–33 for brief general accounts of Roman sexual ideology.

40. In 78b, the application of an amatory trope to the *os impurum* heightens repugnance: the collocation of adjectives in *purae pura puellae / savia comminxit spurca saliva tua* travesties the principle of applying identical epithets to literary lovers (Wills 226).

41. Parker 51–53. For a full analysis of the notional framework, see C. A. Williams 197–203, who bluntly pronounces: "Fellatio and cunnilingus were thus understood as two aspects of a single, repellent phenomenon: two sides of one repulsive coin" (200).

42. In more dignified forms of public discourse it is restricted to euphemism and directed primarily at nonélites. On the language of sexual allegations and the class bias of such charges in Ciceronian oratory, see Corbeill 104–6 and 112–27, esp. 124–27.

43. This is the consensus of all modern scholars; indeed, the epigram would make very little sense otherwise. Giri argued that *pulcer* is merely a descriptive adjective and "Lesbius" designates only a "lover of Lesbia," without any implication of consanguinity. However, a Roman readership in the habit of inferring familial relationships from nomenclature would automatically hear in "Lesbius/Lesbia" a hint at blood kinship. Cicero's constant allegations that Clodius had committed incest with one or more siblings must have ensured that Lesbius' paramour Lesbia would be identified as a sister and not anything as remote and innocent as, say, a paternal cousin. If *Rufulum* is the correct reading at 59.1, Rufa the wife of Menenius is also servicing a kinsman, perhaps, from the diminutive, a younger brother (Nappa 1999a: 331). Citing the formula *ubi tu Gaius, ibi ego Gaia* ("where thou art Gaius, there am I Gaia") used in the wedding rite, in which the common *praenomen* metonymically designates the married couple, Wills 282 suggests that the pairing of "Lesbius" and "Lesbia" (as well as "Rufa" and "Rufulus") reflects not only a shared family but also a shared marital name, reinforcing imputations of unsuitable affection.

44. Shackleton Bailey's demonstration that "Cloelius" was the true *nomen* of the man alleged to perform cunnilingus upon Clodia Metelli at Cic. *Dom.* 25 and 83

removes the possibility that he, and not P. Clodius, was our “Lesbius.” Corbeill 112–24 explains how Cicero’s attribution of the *os impurum*—a charge normally reserved for social inferiors—to a political lieutenant implicates the aristocratic Clodius himself in oral perversion. For Cloelius’ background, occupation, and connection with Clodius, see Damon.

45. Roman women at the time generally bore only the feminized form of the *nomen gentilicium* and were distinguished after marriage by the addition of the husband’s *nomen* in the genitive. Thus all three of Clodius’ sisters were originally named “Claudia”; whether all followed him in adopting the vulgar spelling of the *nomen* is uncertain. Although majority opinion holds that Catullus’ Lesbia is Clodia Metelli, Wiseman (1969: 50–60 and 1974: 104–14) contends that this assumption remains unproven: the question cannot be settled on the internal evidence of the poems. My argument for the validity of the traditional identification, however, is based instead upon contemporary *extrinsic* evidence.

46. On Clodia’s “blazing” eyes, note *Cael.* 49, *flagrantia oculorum*, and βῶπις, Cicero’s nickname for her at *Att.* 2.9.1 and elsewhere. For what else can be deduced about the historical Clodia Metelli—as opposed to the creature of hostile invention—see Skinner 1983.

47. In Skinner 1983: 282 n. 24, I suggest that the review of L. Lucullus’ testimony at *Mil.* 73, which firmly restricts the incest charge to Lucullus’ former wife, may be evidence of a prior reconciliation between Cicero and Metellus’ widow.

48. At *Dom.* 45–46, Cicero sums up the procedural violations occasioned by the passage of the law *de exsilio Ciceronis* and then predicts that what befell him, an ex-consul, could even more readily happen to wealthy men of lesser stature.

49. OLD s.v. *vendere*, 3: cf. Verg. A. 6.621, *vendidit hic auro patriam* (“this man sold the state for gold”) and the reflexive use at Cic. *Pis.* 48, *se ipsum . . . vendidit*.

50. Veneration of Horus, son of Isis, under the name “Harpocrates” was part of the Ptolemaic cult of Isis and Serapis, already established in Rome at the time (see poem 10.26). Harpocrates was depicted as a child with his finger to his lips, widely interpreted as an emblem of the silence imposed upon initiates (*Var. L.* 5.57). With *irrumare*, etymologically derived from *ruma*, “teat,” Catullus hints at another meaning of the gesture, that of alluding to Horus as a suckling child, and thus invests it with obscene associations (Kitchell 103–5).

51. “She does not enter into it at all. He is not concerned with the woman at all, only with his own feelings” (Ferguson 1987: 138).

52. Yet, though it appears distinct in subject matter, tone, and even style, the intervening epigram is also linked to the central concerns of the *odi et amo* cycle, for in its focus upon the applicability of the term *formosa*, “elegant,” it shifts back to the issue of appropriate language. On poem 86 as a programmatic pronouncement upon the “neoteric” epigram, see below, ch. 4.

53. The opening assertion *tantum . . . amatam / . . . quantum a me Lesbia amata mea es* also echoes *amata nobis quantum amabitur nulla* at 8.5 and *amata tantum quantum amabitur nulla* at 37.12. In poem 99, as we will see in ch. 4, Catullus employs verbal reminiscences of 5, 7, and 48 to bid a retrospective farewell to his *basia*-poems. In this epigram, allusion to the two poems in choliambics concerned with Lesbia may serve the same clausal purpose.

54. Gellius’ criminality is so great, Catullus says at 88.5–6, that neither Tethys nor Oceanus could wash it away. S. J. Harrison points out that the mythological pair of sea-gods is an incestuous couple.

55. Thomson 1997: 519–20 cites Suet. fr. 104 Reifferscheid for the information

that *omentum*—here, presumably, the casing of the entrails—was once used as writing-material. Even if that detail is not literally true, the appearance of the membrane itself would suggest parchment.

56. So Németh 29–30, who establishes through parallels from Cicero (*Cat.* 1.6.15 and elsewhere) that this imagery is “gladiatorial” and evokes the mental picture of single combat before attentive spectators.

57. Forsyth (1972–73: 177) and Macleod (1973: 308), followed by numerous other commentators. Dettmer (1997: 194) suggests that the four consecutive Gellius poems “are meant to be conspicuous” because of their pivotal position as the centerpiece of the entire group of texts written in elegiac couplets. I would add that their prominence as a single block of poems within the shorter pieces prepares us for and explains Gellius’ reappearance in the poem that concludes the book.

58. In Skinner 1979 I demonstrate this thesis through close readings of iambic attacks upon Caesar, Mamurra, and Piso. As a follow-up, I argue in Skinner 1982 that insinuations of incest, male prostitution, and the *os impurum* in poem 79 are tropes for Clodius’ ruthless political opportunism.

59. Cf. Corbeill 101–4 on metaphoric implications of references to the *os* and 128–73 on the relationship between anxiety regarding the structures of Roman masculinity and charges of excessive feasting and effeminacy.

60. Münzer’s conclusion (*RE* VII [1910]: 1003–5) that they were the same person was followed by Neudling and remained the *communis opinio* until challenged by Wiseman. The difficulty is complicated by Cicero’s testimony to a close friendship between P. Clodius Pulcher and a man named Gellius, a Roman *eques* alleged by Cicero to be a wastrel and revolutionary (*Sest.* 110–12; cf. *Har.* 59; *Vat.* 4). Wiseman (1974: 126–27) argues that this person must indeed be related to the consular Gellii but could not be an elder son, who would be expected to pursue a senatorial career. Hence he contends that Clodius’ friend was a younger brother of the man who had been acquitted at the family tribunal. Benner (160–61) accepts Wiseman’s argument. Evans, however, thinks he might be a half-brother of the consul of 36 by a prior marriage. W. J. Tatum (1999: 115) makes him a member of the preceding generation, brother to the L. Gellius who was consul in 72. The exact identification of the Clodian lieutenant Gellius does not bear on my argument, since he is probably not the same person as Catullus’ Gellius; but his political affiliation with the *Clodiani* assists Catullus’ efforts to forge symbolic bonds between the aristocratic Claudian *gens* and the equally prominent Gellii.

61. “Denn es ist außer Zweifel, daß dieser G. [no. 18] der wiederholt von Catull genannte und angegriffene ist” (Münzer *RE* VII [1910]: 1003).

62. Notwithstanding an earlier claim that “aspersions of sexual misconduct . . . are better apprehended by stressing their literal (if admittedly fictive) content” (W. J. Tatum 1993: 37).

63. IG II².4230 (from the Athenian acropolis) and 4231 (from Eleusis). On the former, see Koehler 630 and further Münzer *RE* VII: 1004–5; Neudling 76; Wiseman 1974: 120–21 with n. 7.

64. When defending M. Caelius, Quintilian asks (*Inst.* 4.2.27), hadn’t one best counter the imputations of immorality first, rather than the poisoning accusation? As confirmation, he observes that Cicero’s entire speech is in fact devoted to the former issues. Then, he goes on, should the advocate talk about the goods of Palla and present a complete account of the violence charge (*deinde [tum] narret de bonis Pallae totamque de vi explicet causam*), which the defendant himself had already done? The phrasing suggests that the matter of Palla’s property was a leading item in the indictment. On the

charges, see further R. G. Austin 152–54 and, on the political background of the trial, Gruen 1974: 305–9.

65. He was endeavoring to forestall a second attempt on his father, who had meantime been acquitted (*cum audiat . . . adolescentem [Caelium] . . . accusari ab eius filio, quem ipse in iudicium et vocet et vocarit*, *Cael.* 1, cf. 16).

66. Stroh (1976: 296–98) maintains that Cicero invented Clodia's affair with his client out of whole cloth as a way of discrediting her testimony for the prosecution. Even if that radical claim were true, the story would still be in circulation, available for elaboration at the hands of another artist.

67. Wiseman's pragmatic caveat (1984: 107–8) that the *cognomen* Rufus was quite common does not take into account the placement of the Rufus sequence within the scroll; close proximity to 79 and its clearly identified players would psychologically narrow the field of probable candidates. Other arguments mounted by doubters rely upon exceedingly literal readings of the poems in question and subjective impressions of what Catullus might be expected *not* to do: in 58, for example, he supposedly would not address a complaint about Lesbia's infidelity to the "Caelius" who was his chief rival (R. G. Austin 148–49, countered by Quinn 1973a: 259). Such positivistic objections do not allow for the complex strategies of literary depiction, whose goal might require the author to disregard certain factual circumstances in representing his object.

68. R. G. Austin 148–50, after dismissing all other supposed mentions of M. Caelius Rufus in the Catullan poems, concludes that 77 "probably does" refer to him; cf. Arkins 1983: 310. The difficulties of identifying him further with the "Caelius" of poem 100 will be addressed below, p. 125 and n. 59.

69. According to Cicero, the prosecution was accusing Caelius of duplicity because earlier in the year he had indicted Bestia for bribery after backing his candidature: [*dixerunt*] *fuisse meo necessario Bestiae Caelium familiarem, cenasse apud eum, ventitasse domum, studuisse praeturae* ("Caelius had been an intimate of my good friend Bestia, had dined with him, frequented his house, supported him for the praetorship," 26). R. G. Austin 155 remarks that "the name occurs so casually that all present must have been familiar with Bestia's identity and his connexion with the case."

70. Noonan 1979: 159 and n. 16. Quint. *Inst.* 1.5.66 records a false etymology of *Lupercalia* as drawn from *luere per caprum*; cf. Serv. ad A. 8.343. Wiseman 1995a, the most recent discussion of the rite, offers a useful compendium of ancient evidence for its origins and meaning.

71. *Ioculari deinde super cena exorta quaestione quondam esset "molestum otium," aliud alio opinante ille "podagrici pedes" dixit*, Macr. 2.7.6. Since this anecdote is retold as an example of the wit that gained Syrus freedom from slavery, the incident must have occurred before he achieved success as a mime-writer in the 40s B.C.E. Consequently, it may be evidence for considerable public awareness of Catullus' work (or, at the very least, of poem 51) soon after its initial circulation.

72. Use of *pes* in this twofold sense is common; cf. Catullus' own double-entendre *malum pedem* at 14.22.

73. The process of "restructuring" comprehension of the *libellus* envisioned here—in which previous readings of individual epigrams are modified on the basis of what follows and then incorporated into a new synthesis—is derived from Iser's account of the "apperception" of a text in consecutive phases: one sentence after the next is decoded and then fitted into what has gone before, which may assume a new configuration as a result (108–18). Consequently, Iser states, "throughout the reading process there is a continual interplay between modified expectations and transformed memories" (111).

74. For the *infamia* attached to prostitution, see C. Edwards 1997; on the invalidity of a prostitute's testimony, with reference to the *pro Caelio*, cf. McGinn 61–64, esp. 63.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. Krostenko (234–41) perceptively analyzes the “erotic idiom” of this poem as an expansion of the “language of social performance” but does not deal with its programmatic resonances.

2. Buchheit (1959: 313) ascribes to Catullus a characteristic habit of cleverly (“raffiniert”) disguising poetic pronouncements by placing them in other contexts.

3. Numerous candidates have been proposed for the book in question, including Mimnermus’ *Nanno* and Antimachus’ *Lyde* (cf. fr. 398 Pfeiffer, Λύδη καὶ παχὺ γράμμα καὶ οὐ τορόν, “the *Lyde* is a fat and dull book,” where, again, both adjectives might also pertain to a woman). On the controversy, see Hopkinson’s lengthy note *ad loc.* Cameron 303–7 traces the practice of ascribing to a female protagonist the qualities of the poem dealing with her back to Asclep. *Anth. Pal.* 9.63.

4. See the exchange in correspondence among Brutus, Calvus, and Cicero recorded by Tacitus (*Dial.* 18), in which each side critiques the other’s style using language descriptive of the human body. For close analysis of this and other relevant passages, consult Keith 42–44.

5. Ennius’ designation for the epic hexameter was *versus longus* (Cic. *Leg.* 2.68).

6. At *Brut.* 262 Cicero’s Brutus passes judgment on Caesar’s *Commentaries*: *valde quidem, inquam, probandos; nudi enim sunt, recti et venusti, omni ornatu orationis tamquam veste detracta*, “they are greatly to be commended indeed, for they are plain, direct and neat, with every rhetorical adornment stripped off like a garment.”

7. According to Monteil (59), *formosus* expresses a very particular kind of physical beauty, “peu raffinée, elle consiste moins en une ligne élégante et gracieuse qu’en une harmonie physique voisine de la santé et constituant une sorte de beauté robuste.”

8. Ross (1969: 137–69) ascribes this difference to the coexistence of two distinct poetic traditions: in 69–116, Catullus conforms to a heritage of “preneoteric” epigram introduced into Latin by Ennius and carried on by such amateur poets as Valerius Aedituus, Porcius Licinus, and Q. Lutatius Catulus, while the neoteric elegies, “not being epigrams in the proper sense” (154), are free to incorporate the stylistic and linguistic innovations of Catullus’ own circle. Duhigg believes that “differences of technique must reflect differences of intention or differences of approach” based upon a hierarchy of genres (66), an assumption grounded upon Quinn’s problematic notion of diverse “levels of intent” within the corpus (1971 [1959]: 27–43). In the following discussion, I will attempt to establish my own position that the shift to a less heightened diction and rougher metrical technique in the epigrams is correlated with a thematic distrust of poeiticity.

9. Similarly, Nielsen 262 proposes that Lesbia is functioning as a Muse, typifying “the essence of beauty in inspired poetry.”

10. Thematic and functional associations between Lesbia and Juventius in the *Passer* are reinforced by parallel placement of hendecasyllabic and nonhendecasyllabic texts within each cycle; for detailed discussion, see Stroh 1990. Beck 228 points out, however, that the nonhendecasyllabic items in 14a–26 are composed in “gewöhnlicher, grobere Maße,” and it is possible that this formal departure corresponds to a marked shift of mood and tone in the second sequence.

11. Arkins 1999: 102 observes that “Adonis” may be used as the mythic type for a

philanderer because he was the consort of Venus, from whom Caesar claimed descent. The dove (*columbus*), to which Mamurra is also compared in line 8, is of course Venus' bird.

12. Which one of Juventius' suitors is targeted here is not altogether evident. Although *bellus homo* appears to point unequivocally to Furius, apparent punning references to Aurelius in *Pisaurum* (Dettmer 1997: 189) and *inaurata* (Thomson 1997: 508) invite speculation that he is the *hospes* instead. Michalopoulos, meanwhile, usefully draws attention to Servius' etymology of "Pisaurum" (ad A. 6.825): *Pisaurum dicitur, quod illic aurum pensatum est*. The question may be immaterial, since Furius and Aurelius, like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, are so obviously a symbolic doublet.

13. The shift in tone in the middle of line 3 is sensitively analyzed by Zicàri 192–96; for the probability of epic or tragic parody at the conclusion, see Thomson 1997 *ad loc.*

14. So Neudling 154, referring to epigraphical evidence for the presence of Quintii or Quinctii in Cisalpine Gaul, particularly Brixia, including a C. Quintius C. f. Catullus (CIL V.4460).

15. Quinn 1971 [1959]: 41–42 also notes the latent ambiguity of *eripere*: in addition to its primary sense "seize, carry off" (OLD 1, 2), the verb has a derived meaning "snatch from danger" and so "rescue" (OLD 5), which he believes to be more likely here. Consequently, he maintains, this is not a poem of jealousy, as most critics assume, but instead a request that a friend cease his well-intended attempts to free Catullus from his infatuation. Forsyth 1975 objects that Catullus restricts other uses of *eripere* to the former of these two meanings; the sole exception is 76.20, *eripite hanc pestem perniciemque mihi*, where its application to divine redemption is more legitimate. She admits, however, that the text does leave room for such imprecision and is the richer for it.

16. On the emotive force of these elisions (along with the awkwardness of the line) see Thomson 1997: 496.

17. I am greatly indebted to the anonymous OSU Press reader for calling my attention to this feature of the poem and relating it to other epigrams in which questions of value arise.

18. Remarking upon changing fashions in aspiration, Quint. *Inst.* 1.5.20 observes that the aspirate was for a short time over-used, *qua de re Catulli nobile epigramma est*.

19. The implications of *liber* are much debated. Since the Arrius to whom Catullus is generally thought to refer (see below) was of praetorian rank and a member of a gens well-established in southern Latium and northern Campania (Neudling 7), an insinuation that his maternal kindred were, in contrast to this *avunculus*, not freeborn may appear unlikely even by the loose standards of Roman political invective. However, claims that it is a cognomen alluding to the uncle's drinking habits (*Liber* = Bacchus) seem even more strained. Nisbet 110 emends to *semper*; Harrison and Heyworth 106–7 propose *libere avunculus olim*.

20. On the judicial provisions of this law, see Gruen 1974: 235.

21. Proponents include Neudling, Fordyce, Quinn, and most recently Thomson; alternative attempts to identify him with the lisping C. Lucilius Hirrus, mentioned at Cic. *Fam.* 2.10.1, or with Cicero's tiresome neighbor at Formiae C. Arrius (Att. 2.14.2 and 15.3), have not won support. Belief in two men named Q. Arrius, one of them Crassus' adherent and the other the praetor of 73 B.C.E. attested at Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.37, is based upon a date of death for the latter man given in the *Scholia Gronoviana* (ad Cic. *Div. Caec.* 3, p. 324 St.). This, however, has been shown to be a mistaken conjecture on the part of the scholiast (Neudling 7–10; cf. Baker and Marshall 1975).

22. There are appealing intertextual grounds for dating this poem to late 55 or a little afterward. Cicero completed the *de Oratore* about November 55; at *de Or.* 3.45 an interlocutor—interestingly enough, a Crassus of the previous generation—is made to state that women preserve a more antiquated manner of speaking and cite his mother-in-law Laelia as an example: *sono ipso vocis ita recto et simplici est, ut nihil ostentationis aut imitationis adferre videatur: ex quo sic locutum esse eius patrem iudico, sic maiores* (“the very sound of her voice is so direct and simple that she appears to import no showiness or affectation; from which I judge that thus her father spoke, thus her ancestors”). Thomson 1997 in his note on 84.7 observes the similarity of the last clause, with its repeated *sic*, to lines 5–6 of Catullus’ poem and suggests (on the assumption that Cicero’s treatise was already in circulation) that Catullus might well have read this passage, so that his verses could be a sly reminiscence of it, possibly even a parody.

23. With Thomson, I read 95.1–10 as a complete poem; for full argument, see his discussion (1997: 525 and *ad loc.*, line 9).

24. An important observation of Thomson (1997: 523). In the polymetric collection we find only one example, at 22.11 (in an unusual homiletic context). The aphorism at 70.4, classified by Thomson as proverbial, comes by way of Greek sources. Sutphen 17 identifies *mala bestia* as a commonplace, which would give further point to Catullus’ *mala valde est / bestia* at 69.7 (= “a really evil beast”). On the general occurrence of proverbial expressions in Latin, see Otto xxxiv–xxxviii.

25. Plu. *Pomp.* 2 recalls Pompey’s unusual cowlick (*anastolê*) above his brow and his fancied resemblance to Alexander; cf. Luc. 8.680–81; Sil. 13.860–61. It is visible on the Copenhagen marble bust (Toynbee 1978: 24–28 with illustrations 18, 19).

26. However, Seneca substitutes the relative pronoun *quo* for interrogative *quid*, suggesting that he cited from memory. A scholiast on Juv. 9.133 (followed in turn by a commentator on Luc. 7.726) preserves the complete distich. On the text, see now Jocelyn 1996, who prefers the transmitted *homines* for *omnes* and reads *quid? dicas / hunc sibi velle virum?* in the pentameter.

27. Plu. *Pomp.* 48.7. This incident, which took place on February 6 during the trial of Pompey’s supporter Milo, is well attested elsewhere. Cicero gives an eyewitness account to his brother of Clodius’ question-and-answer tactics (QFr. 2.3.2; discussed above, pp. 81–82). There is no indication in his letter, however, that Calvus’ epigram was employed as a means of insult. Cassius Dio (39.19.1) reports that Clodius used this device “on numerous occasions” (πολλάκις).

28. Thus Cicero twits Antony about receiving a bequest from a stranger, *qui albus aterne fuerit ignoras* (*Phil.* 2.41), and Apuleius, in defending himself, claims he knows little of the man accusing him: *libenter te nuper usque albus an ater esses ignoravi et adhuc <h>eracle non satis novi* (“I was happily ignorant till recently of everything about you, and as yet, by Hercules, I don’t know enough,” *Apol.* 16).

29. Otto 11 translates: “ich will mit dir nichts zu thun haben, du bist mir gleichgültig.” Weinreich 17–18, defending a strictly ethical significance for *albus an ater homo*, protests that “Cäsar gegenüber konnte keiner gleichgültig bleiben.” In fact, that circumstance underscores Catullus’ point: he himself no longer *needs* to declare himself for or against the politician.

30. According to Buchheit (1962: 255–56), the proverb itself conceals an obscenity: *olla* is a metaphor for “cunnus,” through analogy with what is regarded as “hot,” and *holus* connotes “penis” (cf. *Priap.* 68.21–22 on *radix*). This interpretation can be bolstered by a punning maxim ζεῖ χύτρα, ζῆ φιλία (“a pot seethes, love lives”) found at Eustath. *Il.* 125.20 *ad* 1.404 (classed as proverbial by Sutphen 256).

31. E.g., Hor. *Carm.* 1.24.19–20, *levius fit patientia, / quicquid corrigere est nefas* (“whatever it is prohibited to set right grows lighter through endurance”), and cf. the comparable endings of *Carm.* 2.3 and 7, 3.16, and the famous *dulce est desipere in loco* (“it is sweet to play the fool opportunely”) at *Carm.* 4.12.28.

32. On the strong effect of closure produced by proverbs and maxims, see Smith 168–71; Fowler 1989: 103–4 and 114–15 (gnomic endings in tragedy, with reference to Euripides’ *Heracles*).

33. The mss. give the reading *Hortensius*, and the dedicant of 65 is credited by Velleius (2.16.3) with the composition of *Annales*, which would make him a suitable partner for Volusius. However, his inclusion at this point seems to disrupt the logical parallelism between the latter poet and Cinna. Furthermore, Hortensius is classified among writers of erotic verse by Ovid (*Tr.* 2.441–42) and light verse by Pliny (*Ep.* 5.3.5) and appears to have neoteric sympathies (Fordyce *ad loc.*). Consequently, some commentators think the name “Hortensius” has crept into the text from poem 65 as a substitute for a more obscure proper noun. Housman proposed emendation to *Hatriensis in*, a conjecture printed by Goold. Ancient Hatria lay on the Adriatic coast about 3 km from the mouth of the Po, which would provide a rationale for *ipsam* in line 7 and set up the joke in line 8. For a more exhaustive defense of this conjecture, see Solodow.

34. The supplement *sodalis*, proposed by Avantius for the first Aldine edition of 1502, remains a favorite with editors (Baehrens, Ellis, Friedrich, and Kroll all print it, while Fordyce, though leaving the question open, pronounces it “very suitable”). Thomson prefers B. Guarinus’ “long-neglected” *poetae*. Bergk conjectured *Philetæ*, in contrast to Antimachus a poetically correct writer for neoterics, but the opposition of literary models is rhetorically effective only if the couplet is deemed independent of the first eight verses; attached to them, it appears redundant.

35. Morgan (1980) proposes that Volusius’ *Annales* dealt with Pompey’s eastern Mediterranean campaign against pirates in 67 B.C.E., in which expedition the Po could have played a part. Catullus’ opposition of the two rivers, then, might be explained by the hypothesis that each was featured as a setting for the poetic action.

36. Noonan 300–302 infers this rite from Nonn. *D.* 13.456–60, where Aphrodite is said to have enfolded (ἀνεχλαίνωσε) Adonis in a garment after his bath. Since Nonnus draws so heavily upon Hellenistic authors, the assumption that he used a source known to Catullus is a plausible one.

37. See Thomson 1997 *ad loc.* on the fish being wrapped for cooking, not transport.

38. Antimachus is also dismissed as a popular but inferior poet by Philodemus, although the passage, as far as I know, has never been adduced in direct connection with Catullus 95. The Stoic theorist (possibly Aristo of Chios, but the name is badly preserved) whom Philodemus attacks in *On Poems* V cols. xvi.28–xxiv.21 Mangoni is there said to have cited Antimachus as an example of a poet whose work could be considered “fine” (ἀστῆιον) because it was educational, while ranking Homer’s and (conjecturally) Archilochus’ poems lower on the scale of excellence. Philodemus takes his priorities to task, asserting that “if someone won’t say these poems [Homer’s] are good, I do not see which ones he will say [are good].” Admitting that some persons do in fact admire Antimachus as the epitome of poetic art, he finally commends him sarcastically for specifying cities and places with such beautiful harmony and placing them in such excellent order, “something one might actually call useful” (col. xx Mangoni). It goes too far, I admit, to base a claim that Catullus has read Philodemus on this one passing reference: in honoring a neoteric follower of Callimachus, any poet might readily cast Antimachus as a foil, since Callimachus himself had poked fun at

the *Lyde* (fr. 398 Pfeiffer). Yet it is an interesting coincidence that Philodemus singles out Antimachus' interest in geographic locales and Catullus' poem turns on a joke involving them.

39. However, poem 95 occupies approximately the right place for what Conte 1992 terms a "poem in the middle," a programmatic statement occurring halfway through explicating the principles on which poetry is to be composed.

40. Tränkle 93–99 challenges the notion that Calvus and Quintilia were husband and wife because the Catullan terms *amores* and *amicitiae* are used only of poetic mistresses; Quintilia's marital status, however, is not germane to my case. He also denies that *missas* can be construed to mean "voluntarily abandoned," going so far as to propose textual corruption (97). This seems a desperate expedient and is unsupported by the mss. tradition; Fordyce and Thomson agree that the participle can bear such a significance. Ovid tells us that Calvus wrote as frankly about his illicit love affairs as did Catullus: *par fuit exigui similisque licentia Calvi / detexit variis qui sua furta modis* (Tr. 2.431–32). *Furta* in its Ovidian context clearly means "affairs with married women" (Thomson 1997: 529).

41. As Bringmann (27 n. 9) observes, it is impossible to determine whether the referent of *hoc* is *amore*, as suggested by Catullus' corresponding line, or *carmine*, implying that Calvus regards his poem as an offering (*munus*) to the dead.

42. For poem 76, see above, p. 74. Commenting on 102.1–2, M. J. Edwards (1990: 383) asserts that introductory *si quicquid* in a Catullan epigram always governs an apodosis containing a desirable outcome left unrealized because the condition that would produce it is not met.

43. Thomson (1997: 531): "*aestu*: editors seem to take this as referring to warm (summer) weather. Surely, however, it is more likely that it has to do with certain biological rhythms, which in some cases can be observed to affect even mules, though they are sterile." Experience with female equids tells me that both senses of *aestus* should be understood; indeed, if anywhere in Latin literature the two meanings of an ambiguity are in play simultaneously, it is here.

44. At 83.1 Catullus addresses Lesbia's husband as *mule*, with reference to his obliviousness (but, *pace* Otto 232, the mule was not proverbial for stupidity; see Fordyce *ad loc.*). It may be pertinent that male mules, useless for breeding purposes, would routinely have been castrated (Adams 1993: 44–45). Mental correlations between Cisalpine Gaul and female mules surface elsewhere in the *liber Catulli*. In poem 17, an imaginary exhortation to an unnamed north Italian *colonia*, the speaker imagines an aged fellow-townsmen (*municipem meum*, 8) roused from stupor by being tossed from a bridge: [*si pote*] . . . *supinum animum in gravi derelinquere caeno, / ferream ut soleam tenaci in voragine mula* ("if it is possible to leave his torpid soul behind in the thick sludge, like a mule leaves her iron shoe in a sticky bog," 25–26). This peculiar association may have inspired the composer of *Catalepton* 10 to frame his attack upon Sabinus, the upstart former muleteer from Cisalpine Gaul, as a parody of Catullus 4. Reminiscences of Catullus 17—all involving mud—surface at Cat. 10.12, *lutosa Gallia* (cf. Catul. 17.9, *in lutum*); 15, *tua stetisse <dicat> in voragine* (see 17.26, quoted above); and 16, *tua in palude* (cf. 17.4, *cavaque in palude*).

45. Krostenko 283–84 remarks that the voice of the poem, whom he refers to as a "Paduan," is a rustic character speaking dialect, but dissociates his identity from that of Catullus. The regionalism *ploxenum* seems to function, however, as a *biographème*, indicating that he is an exaggerated but ironically recognizable comic persona.

46. Achilles Statius identified the addressee as the enigmatic informer L. Vettius, who in 59 B.C.E. charged prominent senators, including Cicero, with forming a con-

spiracy to assassinate Pompey and died in prison shortly thereafter (contemporaneous evidence includes Cic. Att. 2.24; Sest. 63; see also Dio 37.41.2–4, 38.9.2–4; Suet. Iul. 17 and 20; Schol. Bob. 308, 320; App. BC 2.12; Plut. Lucull. 42). It is tempting to find a double-entendre in the concluding couplet, and certainly accusations of halitosis can serve as a political trope for demagoguery—as I argued in Skinner 1982: 204, where I accepted the identification. On this hypothesis, though, the squib would have to have been circulated during the Vettius affair, and, as Neudling remarks, none of the other political invectives in the Catullan corpus can be dated this early (186). Reasons for including an epigram with short-lived topical impact in a collection assembled several years later would be its lasting notoriety (e.g., poem 29 in the polymetric *libellus*) or its relative importance to the theme of the collection (e.g., 93). Neither seems to be the case here. Syme 1979 [1959]: 439 broaches the possibility of another Vettius mentioned at Cic. Cael. 71, associated with Clodia in some scandal (*fabula*) and presumably one of her lovers—or so at least Cicero insinuates.

47. The adjective, a *hapax* in Latin, transliterates Greek *karbatinos*, “made of rawhide,” therefore worn by peasants. For the early Renaissance controversy over the meaning of the word, see Fitzgerald 73–74.

48. Otto 100–101 cites similar proverbial expressions in German.

49. L. Aemilius Paullus, brother of the subsequent triumvir M. Aemilius Lepidus, appeared as a witness against P. Sestius in 56 B.C.E. along with L. Gellius Poplicola and P. Vatinius (cf. Cic. Q.Fr. 2.4.1). Insofar as his associates Gellius and Vatinius are repeatedly attacked by Catullus, it is conceivable that Paullus, too, might come under fire as the “Aemilius” of poem 97 (Neudling 1). Forsyth (1979: 408) accounts for the connection of 97 and 98 by noting that L. Aemilius Paullus was among the senators Vettius accused of conspiracy. Her explanation, however, would require the speaker to align himself (*nos . . . omnes perdere*, 98.5) with the interests of a man viciously maligned in the preceding poem. Catullan slander is usually more consistent than that.

50. Khan 616–18 suggests that the direct model was Theocritus 20, in which a girl from the city jeers at a cowherd for attempting to kiss her. There are, however, no lexical echoes of this poem in Catullus 99, and the situational parallel is not close enough to bring it immediately to the mind of a reader.

51. See also Theoc. 1.1–7; AP 5.169 (Asclepiades). On the relationship of Cillactor’s poem to Nossis’, consult L. Bowman 52.

52. Marshall 58, who also calls attention to the medical terminology used throughout the poem.

53. The classic illustration is Ov. Fast. 3.473, where Ariadne, deserted a second time, “remembers” her previous abandonment by Theseus in Catullus 64: *dicebam, memini, “periure et perfide Theseu!”* See Conte 1986: 60–62 and Hinds 3–4.

54. Whatmough (50) thinks *basium* was already acclimatized in Latin by Catullus’ time. Catullus reserves *basium* for erotic occasions, using *savium* and its cognates in a more neutral sense: thus he applies the latter verb to Acme kissing her lover (*saviata*, 45.12), but also employs it when welcoming back his friend Veranius (*saviabor*, 9.9). The kisses of greeting Lesbians’ confederates are reluctant to give are likewise *savia* (79.4). *Osculum* too is an “amatory” word in Catullus; it is used of the dove kissing her mate at 68.127, and *osculatio* forcefully concludes 48, the kiss-poem to Juventius. For additional discussion of the three Latin words for “kiss,” see Moreau 1978.

55. My special thanks to one of the ms. referees who suggested this line of argument.

56. Demonstrating how such loose ends subvert textual logic and expose the arbitrary and tenuous nature of conclusions supposedly reached by the text is the basic pro-

ject of deconstructive criticism. For a convenient and accessible explanation of this strategy, see Culler 251–60.

57. Smith 233–34. In an important footnote (233 n. 42) she points out that both “openness” and “closure” are relative terms. Fowler 1997 makes the corollary observation that “to think of closure is to be forced to cross the boundaries of the literary into wider cultural and political analysis . . . divisions that seem natural may yet be cultural” (13). Hence the propriety of an ending must be judged by ancient generic standards, not by whether it necessarily conforms to our taste. For a perceptive analysis of false closure within poem 8, see Fowler’s earlier study (1989: 98–101).

58. The text is corrupt; *perspecta* is a fifteenth-century correction of V’s *perfecta*, and *est igni tum* is Palmer’s conjecture for X’s probable *est exigitur est*, or something similar (Thomson 1997 *ad loc.*). *Perspecta igni* is a commonplace employed three times by Cicero (*Fam.* 9.16.2; *Off.* 2.38; *Red. Sen.* 23). See also Fordyce *ad loc.* and Otto 170.

59. The equation of this Caelius with M. Caelius Rufus cannot stand, according to scholars, because he is Veronese, while the historical M. Caelius was apparently from Interamnia in Picenum, a region of central Italy situated on the Adriatic coast. (See Neudling 31 and R. G. Austin 146–47 on the problematic evidence for Caelius’ birthplace at Cic. *Cael.* 5; the passage itself is corrupt.) Those who reject the identification include R. G. Austin 148–50; Wiseman 1969: 56; Arkins 1983: 308; Syndikus 1987: 103 n. 3, among others. For an opposing but quite subjective argument, see Forsyth 1977b, who reads poem 100 as ironic. Thomson 1997: 342–43 and 535 makes a good case for identifying the addressees of 58 and 100 when he points out that *Remi nepotes* (“descendants of Remus”) at 58.5 indicates that Lesbia is in Rome, while Caelius and Catullus are presumably living elsewhere.

60. Levine (1987: 37–38) and Simpson (1992: 211) raise the alternative possibility that *amicitia* alludes to a previous sexual encounter between Catullus and Caelius: the speaker was aflame with desire, and the “homosexual” Caelius proved his friendship by offering him release. This explanation is false, for it violates ancient ideas of sexual role behavior. In courting the boy Aufillenus, the adult Caelius takes the active sexual role; had he submitted to Catullus, he would have behaved as a *cinaedus*, who, in essence, desires only to be penetrated and cannot switch from being passive to playing the active partner. Even if Catullus’ pledge of support is construed as ironic, an insinuation of sexual passivity would make no sense here. Both Levine and Simpson have been led astray by the modern concept of the “homosexual,” who is defined by fixed choice of object instead of fixed role preference.

61. The indissolubility of the fraternal bond was indeed proverbial (Otto 146). Members of a religious confraternity (*sodalitas*) were bound by ties analogous to those of brothers; thus it was felt inappropriate for them to prosecute each other in court (Cic. *Cael.* 26).

62. The two words for “illegal political group” in circulation at this time were *sodalitas* and *sodalicium*. *Sodalitas*, according to Hellegouarc’h, is the more general term and was also applied to legitimate associations formed for religious purposes; *sodalicium* is more specific, used strictly in a political context during the late Republic and therefore possessing “une nuance péjorative” (109–10). Ellis (478) recognizes the political slant of Catullus’ mention of *sodalicium* and is followed in this by Levine (1987: 36). Neither scholar, however, thinks in terms of a systematic use of political imagery throughout the poem. On the basis of this reference, Ellis dates the poem to 55 B.C.E., but its topical relevance need not be limited to the time when Crassus’ legislation was being debated; charges brought against Plancius in 54 would have prolonged the controversy. Simpson (1992: 205 n. 8) also perceives a hint at current

political controversies, but this suggestion fits oddly with his claim that the diction of 100 otherwise belongs to “the patois of the race track.”

63. On the provisions of the *lex Licinia de sodaliciis*, see Gruen 1974: 230–33.

64. However, since the emendation derives its plausibility from this one Ciceronian passage (*Fam.* 9.16.2 and *Off.* 2.38, which also employ *igni* in conjunction with *perspicere*, do not speak of *amicitia*), any attempt to deduce Catullus’ meaning from it would beg the question—as the student who is my implied reader might object.

65. Although this is admittedly a stretch, the topical imagery of Roman politics in 100 could also call up a remembrance of *imperator unice*, Catullus’ mocking epithet for Caesar, which occurs in his most notorious polemic (29.11), and is then repeated in a context giving the impression that it had quickly become a popular joke: *irascere iterum meis iambis / inmerentibus, unice imperator* (“you will again fly into a rage at my blameless iambs, one-of-a-kind generalissimo,” 54.7–8). Thomson (1997: 131, 335) separates these two lines from 54 and prints them as a unitary distich numbered 54b. Despite the fact that this would be the only case of a two-line poem in the polymetrics, the proposal has merit because of the similar deployment of political monodistiches in the epigrams.

66. *Potens* may be used as a substantive to imply that an individual is exercising power for sinister ends: the advocate, according to Cicero, earns *gloria* and *gratia* by coming to the aid of someone *qui potentis alicuius opibus circumveniri urguerique videatur* (“who seems beset and pressured by the resources of someone powerful,” *Off.* 2.51), and Sallust’s Catiline charges that the state has fallen in *paucorum potentium ius atque dicionem* (“under the rule and control of a few powerful men,” *Cat.* 20.7).

67. Readers frequently surmise that poem 101 commemorates a real visit to the burial site in the course of the poet’s homeward journey from Bithynia in 56 B.C.E. Nothing stands in the way of this assumption, although the occasion may equally well be imaginary. Roman law provided that, in default of a will enjoining someone else to oversee the funeral rites, responsibility for them devolved upon the *paterfamilias* or the closest kin, who were also the heirs (Toynbee 1971: 54). Contemporaries would understand that Catullus thus speaks for all members of his family; Syndikus (1987: 107) correctly observes that he acts in a quasi-official capacity.

68. Such statements must be distinguished from those Austin calls “constative,” which claim to describe a set of circumstances or impart information, and to which criteria of truth and falsity may legitimately be applied (J. L. Austin 3). Selden applies this linguistic model of “performative” speech to the operations of Catullan rhetoric, arguing that “the majority of Catullus’ poetry is in fact performative and not constative” (1992: 481). He does not, however, number poem 101 among his catalogue of texts illustrating different discursive operations.

69. Fordyce *ad loc.* perceptively translates: “things being as they are, (though my offering is vain and you are lost to me), for all that let me give it to you.”

70. In 103, Silo is given a choice: “return my money and then be as rude and intractable (*saevus et indomitus*) as you like, or, if the money is more attractive, accept your status as a pimp (*leno*) and cease to be rude and intractable.” Since the *cognomen* Silo points to a man of free birth, an unlikely background for a professional *leno* (Fordyce 392), the joke must lie in the metaphorical imposition of the notion of *lenocinium* upon some financial transaction whose real nature is no longer apparent.

71. For instances of “Tappo” and its cognates as *nomen gentile* or *cognomen*, see Konrad 224–27. On its possible origin, by way of the *phylax*-dramas of Magna Graecia, in Dor. *θαπῶν (= Att. θηπῶν, glossed by Hesych. as θαυμάζων, ἐξαπατῶν, κολακεύων), consult Walde-Hofmann (s.v. *tappulam*); cf. Whatmough 51–52.

Accepting this derivation, Forsyth 1976 conjectures from verbal links that the addressee is the Quintius of poem 82 and that "Tappo" is a clownish epithet for his associate from poem 100, Caelius, whom she identifies as M. Caelius Rufus; but all that goes far beyond the evidence.

72. On restorations to the fragment of the *lex Tappula* found at Vercelli (*CIL Suppl. Ital.* 5.898, *ILS* 2.2.8761) I follow Konrad, who provides the most recent discussion. From internal evidence, as well as Festus' *testimonium*, the law must be dated to the late second century B.C.E. (Konrad 230–34).

73. Fordyce *ad loc.* sees sexual implications in *omnia monstra facis*, which he translates "you shrink from no enormity," though he admits the reference of *cum Tappone* is thereby rendered unclear. There probably is such a double-entendre in the closing hemistich, to be perceived only upon reflection; the associations of the clown figure Tappo would probably dictate, initially, an "innocent" reading of the last line. Here is a case, I think, where we miss the satiric point because we lack the "horizon of expectations" of a contemporary reader familiar with the traditional personality of Tappo.

74. Holzberg 24–28 demonstrates that, on a sequential reading of the polymetrics, poem 16 is responding to a false conclusion about the masculinity of the speaker drawn by a notional audience that would have just encountered poems 5 and 7.

75. Dettmer (1997: 208) notes that *scandere* ("mount") is properly used of animal copulation and thus reinforces the rustic imagery of *furcillis*. "Casting out with a pitchfork" is, of course, another proverbial expression: cf. Hor. *Ep.* 1.10.24 and other instances cited by Otto 151.

76. The indirect discourse construction leaves the subject of *se vendere* ambiguous. Editors understand it to be the boy, but Bushala observes, quite rightly, that *praeconem* is the more natural subject. He interprets *se vendere* in a metaphoric sense, "to ingratiate himself," so that the wit lies in reversing the amatory cliché of a pretty boy *literally* selling himself. I submit that a Roman reader would first construe the distich as Bushala does, but then turn it around once she perceived its political thrust.

77. *Dom.* 44, 116 ([Clodius] *cum aedis meas idem emeret et venderet, tamen illis tantis tenebris non est ausus suum nomen emptioni illi adscribere*), cf. Plu. *Cic.* 33. Normally the arrangements for *publicatio bonorum* were handed over to the urban praetor and quaestors (for full treatment see Moreau 1987: 476–78; cf. W. J. Tatum 1999: 157).

78. Above, p. 82. For example, the reiterated accusations of literal and metaphorical prostitution in *Har. Resp.* 1, 46, 48, 52, discussed in Skinner 1982: 202–4.

79. Regardless of his cogent demonstration that poem 79 has to do with Clodius' law *de exilio Ciceronis*, W. J. Tatum (1993: 41) considers the suggestion that 106 also refers to Clodius "far-fetched." This censure is prompted, however, by Ellis' fanciful guess that Clodius might have "used the services of a crier to harangue the people" (485–86).

80. Miller (1994: 59). Neudling (48) advocates a reference to the P. Cominius who, in the 60s B.C.E., had prosecuted the ex-tribune C. Cornelius for *maiestas* despite widespread disapproval, but Fordyce (396) thinks the incident too remote. Whoever the target of this poem is, the people's verdict against him (*populi arbitrio*, 1) caps the succession of appeals to the collective judgment of the community found in the last section of the *libellus*.

81. Neudling (17) notes that the name "Aufillenus" is Etruscan in origin and, of the eight inscriptions in which it occurs, four belong to Verona and its environs.

82. Wiseman's argument, based largely on the testimony of such witnesses as the elder Cato, Tacitus, and the younger Pliny, that "the rural communities of Italy were where traditional morality lived on most strongly" (1985: 110–11) may contain some

element of truth, but, as C. Edwards notes (1993: 42, 59, 149, 190), the virtuous simplicity of country life, as opposed to the evils of the capital, was also a standard motif in moralizing discourses.

83. Dettmer reaches a similar conclusion: "Aufillena's failure to keep a promise and her promiscuity are intended to undermine the sentimentality of the final Lesbia poem, in which Catullus' lady promises eternal love" (1997: 216).

84. De Grummond argues for the former possibility, Bush the latter. It is highly unlikely that Aufillena is actually married to her uncle, as Watson 1985 proposes.

85. Although the meaning of *descendit* is disputed, no modern editor accepts the emendations of Haupt or Schwabe; Kroll *ad loc.* protests that such a reading "nimmt die Pointe vorweg."

86. Thomson's attempt (1987: 191) to disprove that *descendere*, used absolutely, can mean "go down to the Forum to be involved in political activities" does not convince me.

87. Forsyth (1983: 66) points out that construing this *multus* as collective would require the subjunctive in a relative clause of characteristic (*qui descendat*). This does not seem an insuperable objection: if textual critics are prepared to emend the verb, a change of one letter seems less drastic than other readings already proposed (see the *apparatus criticus* above).

88. For a review of critical opinion, see Forsyth 1983: 65–66.

89. That connotation also underlies the predicative use of the adjective at Sal. *Jug.* 96.3, where Sulla "persistently fraternizes with" (*multus adesse*) ordinary soldiers: there too the subject calls attention to himself by his frequent performance of an action. Citing the two Sallustian passages, Morgan (1979: 379) argues that *multus* at the opening of the poem should mean "assiduous," on the grounds that it is an appropriate term for an aspiring politician; but the presence of a verb, adjective, or adverb would be required to elicit that significance.

90. Thus Cicero names among Catiline's supporters a group of fashionable dandies said to be his "dearest friends," *de eius dilectu immo vero de complexu eius ac sinu* (Cat. 2.22); an interesting variant is his allegation that Clodius' lieutenant Sex. Cloelius has alienated (*abalienavit*) Clodius' sister from him by performing cunnilingus upon her (Dom. 25). For the homology between *clientela* and a sexual relationship, and its slippery equation of *cliens* with prostitute, see Oliensis.

91. Attempts to emend to *Mucillam* and explain the epigram as a squib directed at Pompey's third wife Mucia, divorced, allegedly for adultery with Caesar, in 62 B.C.E., are dubious: see Thomson 1997 *ad loc.*

92. Accordingly, Dettmer (1997: 219) argues that the poem attempts to humiliate the nameless pair, who, following Schwabe, she believes to be Caesar and Mamurra. This is no more than a wild guess.

93. Cf. Cic. *Part.* 90, *voluptas quae maxime est inimica virtuti bonique naturam fallaciter imitando adulterat*. . . . ("pleasure, which is most antagonistic to virtue and degrades the nature of the good by falsely imitating it").

94. On Pompey's ties to Picenum, see Syme 1939: 31 and Gruen 1974: 63–64.

95. Harvey, drawing comparative data from records of land allotments and agromonomical treatises, argues that the estate described would have been a desirable agricultural property and that Catullus is castigating its exploitation as an aviary, fishpond, and hunting preserve, facilities dedicated to the luxurious and fashionable pursuits of the aristocracy. However, poem 114 states merely that the land contains, among its resources, birds, fish, and wild beasts, not that special facilities have been constructed for raising them.

96. The verb *salio*, “leap, bound,” was applied in a specialized sense to the male animal who “covers” a female (OLD s.v. *salio* 4; cf. Adams 1982: 206). Its cognate adjective *salax*, “horny,” was an epithet of Priapus, designated simply as *deus salax* at *Priap.* 14.1 and 34.1. Catullus refers to the *taberna* frequented by Lesbia’s vigorous lovers as *salax* (37.1) and threatens to deface it with *sopiones*, phallic graffiti (Adams 1982: 64–65).

97. The most extensive elaboration of this image is Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata* 254–386, where the chorus of old women seize the Acropolis and defend it against the onslaught of the old men (e.g., ἐς τὴν θύραν κρηδὸν ἐμπέσοιμεν, “let’s fall upon the gate like a battering ram,” *Lys.* 309).

Notes to Chapter 5

1. A further play on words has been suggested: Bright 1982 observes the similarity of “Allius” to the name of the river Allia, site of the Gauls’ bloody defeat of Rome in 390 B.C.E. The anniversary of that battle (July 18) was termed the *dies Alliensis* and reckoned as particularly ill-omened.

2. Passages frequently cited include [Hes.] *Sc.* 46–47, *Theog.* 1292–94, and *h.Cer.* 101–2, in all of which δῶρ’ Ἀφροδίτης is euphemism for the sexual act. Two Latin parallels adduced by Prescott (499) are extremely late.

3. Hendiadys is postulated, for example, by Baehrens *ad loc.*; Lieberg 1962: 154–75 (an epyllion); Vretska 316–17; Coppel 42–43 (“subjectiv-erotische *ludicra*”); Syndikus 1990: 244–45; and Lefèvre 312–13.

4. Prescott 478–79; Wiseman 1974: 93–94; Woodman 100–101; Fear 247–51.

5. In Skinner 1972 (500 n. 13), I accepted, *faute de mieux*, Jachmann’s explanation (210–12) that the request was for “Kunstgedichte und Liebesgedichte,” but now realize that further consideration is in order.

6. Platter 219 observes other paradoxes in Catullus’ construction of *officium* that make his pose of ethical superiority impossible to maintain.

7. Thomson 1997 *ad loc.* believes lines 15–26 are a rejection of love only, having “nothing to do with literature”; this position is shared by Kroll, Prescott (480–81), Fordyce, and Wiseman (1974: 94).

8. See pp. 168–69 below.

9. A BTL search of *turpis* and its cognates found no instances of playful or colloquially exaggerated usage. Like its antonym *honestas*, *turpitude* belongs to the moral sphere; it is related to the perception of oneself by others and denotes behavior that seriously damages one’s reputation. See Hellegouarc’h 387–88. Fordyce *ad loc.* cites Caelius’ words at *Cic. Fam.* 8.6.5, *turpe tibi erit pantheras Graecas me non habere*, as proof that the adjective is “not to be taken too seriously.” Yet Caelius is giving Cicero a real warning: if Caelius produces no panthers at his games, the Roman people will think poorly of Cicero’s willingness to honor his obligations. Cf. 8.9.3, where he adds that Patiscus’ gift of ten panthers to Curio will put Cicero’s failure to match or exceed it in a worse light.

10. When Cicero contrasts *turpis* with *miser* in oratorical contexts, it is to remove all taint of dishonor: at *Har.* 49 it was *miserum* rather than *turpe* for Pompey, the bravest of men, to have to put up with Clodius’ troublemaking, and at *Quinct.* 98 Cicero’s desperate client makes his appeal *non turpis . . . sed miser*.

11. Although few scholars now entertain the possibility of a reference to Lesbia’s misconduct, the use of *turpis* might be explained by claiming that Catullus had incurred liability for it in deserting her bed at Rome. Support for this notion seems to

be provided by Penelope's reproach to Ulysses at *Ov. Ep.* 1.7, where she lies *frigida* in a *deserto* . . . *lecto*, and again at line 93, in her complaint that he is *turpiter absens*. However, Powell (204) observes that the phrases *frigida* . . . *membra* and *deserto* . . . *cubili* at 68.29 can only mean that the subject (*quisquis*) is sleeping alone, having been deserted by someone else, and the Ovidian passage bears that out. As for Ulysses' absence, it is shameful because it allows the suitors to waste his undefended property; here, as often, a form of *turpis* is used to designate cowardly or unmanly behavior. Catullus' mistress can obviously be said to behave *turpiter*, in a manner that brings shame upon her, but Catullus is not *turpis* for giving her the opportunity to do so. One last objection to the premise that the lines refer to Lesbia's conduct: if Mallius were advising Catullus of her infidelity, why would he bother to specify that her lovers are of the better class? It would be more effective to designate them as *pusilli et semitarii moechi* (37.16).

12. A variant of this explanation is Wiseman's proposal (1974: 94–96) that Mallius had wanted the two to share a girl. Other variations on the same theme are cited by Coppel 35–36 and Sarkissian 47–48 n. 15. Logistical considerations that militate against this notion will already have occurred to the graduate student who is my implied reader, and further objections based on generic principles can be raised. Such scenarios clash with the decorum of an elegy otherwise given over to mourning a brother; atypical arrangements with courtesans and mistresses are a comic or invective motif. Moreover, the conventional erotic language of 68.1–10 casts Mallius in the part of forsaken poet-lover. According to that script, the *amator* remains faithful to the memory of his beloved. He cannot expect to find solace by turning to another; in the rare instances of doing so, he is unable to take advantage of the situation (*Prop.* 4.8.47; *Tibul.* 1.5.39–42). Thus making such a request of Catullus would not be in keeping with Mallius' fictive role.

13. This interpretation construes *deserto* . . . *cubili* in 29 as concessive ("even when beds have been deserted"), which seems contrary to the natural meaning of the Latin phrase.

14. "Sie leiden an schrecklicher Langeweile" (30). A notorious interpretation was advanced by T. E. Kinsey, who accepted the same statements at face value. Kinsey argued that Mallius was "trying to open, or perhaps reopen, a homosexual affair with Catullus" (41–42). For him, the "deserted bed" in line 28 was again Mallius', and the "chilled limbs" warmed in it a pointed hint that, with Catullus gone, other male lovers were supplying consolation. Forsyth 1987 seeks to provide additional support for Kinsey's contention. This suggestion goes much too far because it violates the protocols of Roman erotic discourse. The same cultural code postulating that a male same-sex relationship was necessarily one of dominance and submission would have prohibited public circulation of a document pertaining to an actual or contemplated liaison between two adult males, because one member of the couple would automatically be stigmatized as the passive "feminine" partner. For other arguments against this proposition, see Simpson 1994.

15. For the case against its authenticity, see Courtney 367.

16. Marks of tears: *Prop.* 4.3.3–4; *Ov. Ep.* 3.3–4; anticipation of death: *Prop.* 4.3.6; *Ov. Ep.* 10.81–88 and 119–24; 14.125–30; empty bed: *Ov. Ep.* 1.7; 13.107; anxiety, wakefulness: *Prop.* 4.3.29–32; *Ov. Ep.* 9.35–40, along with many other passages. Coppel (104) sees in the mention of tears a suggestion that the letter to which Catullus supposedly replies was in elegiac couplets.

17. The pronoun *id* must refer back (*OLD* s.v. is 5a–b) to the opening clause *quod* . . . *mittis*, on which everything else in the first eight lines depends grammatically.

Quinn 1973a *ad loc.* cites as a close parallel Cic. Att. 1.8.1, *quod te de Tadiano negotio decidisse scribis, id ego Tadio et gratum esse intellexi et magno opere iucundum* ("what you write you have decided about Tadius' affairs, this I regarded as being both welcome to Tadius and particularly pleasing").

18. Poem 16 dramatically sexualizes the relationship between the poet and his readers, both "unacceptable" (Furius and Aurelius) and "acceptable" (*his pilosis*, aroused despite their *duros . . . lumbos*, 10–11). Fitzgerald (49–51) argues that the reader's sexual excitement puts him in a "passive" position vis-à-vis the author. However, the feelings evoked by the poem can also include desire for its creator (cf. poem 35, in which the *candida puella* falls in love with Caecilius as soon as she reads his "Magna Mater"). In that case, the reader would assume the "active" role of *amator*. It may be more accurate, then, to say that both poet and audience oscillate between a dominant and a submissive "sexual" position during the reading process. In poem 16, Catullus' unequivocal denial of writing in order to inflame boys (*non dico pueris*, 10) rules out the "pederastic" model that Svenbro 187–212 identifies as one of the standard paradigms of reading in classical Greek thought.

19. That associates not on a familiar footing with each other observed an etiquette of polite restraint in correspondence can be inferred from Cicero's letters (see, for example, the strained exchange with M. Porcius Cato, *Fam.* 15.4–6 [51–50 B.C.E.], over a *supplicatio* for Cicero's victories in Cilicia). Epistolary conventions thus form part of what Iser styles the "repertoire," or familiar cultural material, within the text that contributes to the production of meaning by providing a frame of reference (53–85); among other things, that code helps the reader determine the degree of Catullus' intimacy with Mallius.

20. Quinn 1973a *ad loc.* picks up from *delicias* a hint of "intellectual self-indulgence," which is apt.

21. *Quisquis*, "whoever," requires a verb, and the simplest solution is to supply *est* (Fordyce *ad loc.*). *Meliore nota* as a reference to the social elite is justified by Cic. *Fam.* 7.29.1. According to my reading it is gratuitous flattery on Mallius' part, in keeping with his characterization as an officious personality. The Bore in Hor. *Sat.* 1.9 is similarly fulsome.

22. The friend alone on his empty couch may be a cliché of such *versiculi*. Longing to visit and speak with Licinius Calvus again, Catullus too tosses all over his bed (*toto . . . lecto versarer*) as he waits for dawn to come (50.11–13).

23. Inventing arresting nonce-words is another mannerism of neoteric poetics: Catullus' coinages *basiationes* (7.1) and *fututiones* (32.8) come at once to mind.

24. Contrary to the position adopted in Skinner 1972 (505), I now think that *haec . . . munera* at 32 is restricted to the gifts previously discussed and does not point forward to the consideration of models for poetic composition in lines 33–36.

25. Coppel 87–89, citing numerous parallels from Cicero for the use of *nam quod*, with or without a verb of saying, to take up a new point in the addressee's previous correspondence (e.g., Att. 3.10.2; 3.13.2; 9.2a.2; *Fam.* 2.16.5); cf. Syndikus 1990: 247 and n. 47.

26. If *scriptorum* is construed as the genitive of *scripta* rather than *scriptores*, Mallius would be stating that Catullus had none of his own poetry with him—something he could not have known, though he might easily infer an overall shortage of books at Verona. Furthermore, since *veterum . . . scriptorum* in line 7 must mean "earlier authors," there are good *prima facie* grounds for understanding the word in the same way later. Yardley notes that the analogous phrase *copiam librorum* is "almost a technical term for a library" (338).

27. Cf. Ov. Met. 6.447, *ut primum soceri data copia* ("as soon as he was given access to his father-in-law").

28. For a comparable instance of a Catullan text self-consciously speaking of itself to the reader, cf. 14b.2–3, *manusque vestras / non horrebitis admovere nobis* ("and you will not shrink from laying your hands upon me"). I am not convinced by Claes' argument (9–10) that these lines form the conclusion of poem 14, as the bad poets would then be sent packing *only* if they should attempt to read Catullus' own verse.

29. Büchner's proposal to read *verecunde* as an adverb modifying *feremus*, defended by some later scholars, seems an needless attempt to temper an expressive paradox; on this point I fully agree with Thomson 1997 ad loc.

30. For example, Quintilian (*Inst.* 9.2.65) discusses conditions for employing ambiguous speech *in quo per quandam suspicionem quod non dicimus accipi volumus, non utique contrarium, ut in εἰρωνείᾳ, sed aliud latens et auditori quasi inveniendum* ("wherein, through provoking a certain suspicion, we wish what we are *not* saying to be understood, not in the opposite sense as in irony, but as something hiding and needing to be discovered, so to speak, by the listener"). In the schools, he continues, when the speaker avoids danger to himself by couching scathing criticism of, e.g., tyrants in language whose surface meaning is innocuous, "no one does not approve of that device" (*nemo non illi furto favet*, 68).

31. Contrast these betrayals of the author with the *Zmyra*'s fidelity to her interpreter Crassicius (above, pp. 65–66).

32. Taking the simile with what follows seems to require reading *ac* at 63 for mss. *hic*, and most modern editors reject this emendation as unwarranted. For a review of critical opinion, see Vandiver 2000: 152–53 with nn. 6 and 7.

33. Cf. Cic. *Fam.* 9.16.4: Paetus' brother Servius would have readily judged whether a verse was or was not genuinely Plautine *quod tritas auris haberet notandis generibus poetarum et consuetudine legendi* ("because he possessed a trained ear for discerning the styles of poets and their habit of selection").

34. Lack of attention to the self-referentiality of line 69 has led to the introduction of a phantom chatelaine here and at 156, purportedly to lend respectability to the lovers' tryst. Critics who sense that *Lesbia* must be meant, and rightly object to the presence of a third, unnecessary party, go against the reading of *V* to accept Fröhlich's conjecture *dominae*. This emendation, however, is both unnecessary and unpoetic, since it does away with the natural symmetry of *domum* . . . *dominam*. The antecedent of the phrase *ad quam* in the next line is of course the *domus*, but the preposition *ad*, on this reading, is not the equivalent of *apud* (OLD s.v. *ad* C16a) but instead expresses the goal of action carried out. With *exercere* assigned the meaning "practice, perform" (OLD 7a), the phrase *exercere amores* could, on one level, entail literary activity, in view of the frequent use of the plural *amores* as a synecdoche for erotic elegy.

35. For the semantic range of *argut(us)* applied to rhetoric, see now Krostenko 157 n. 6, who identifies the basic idea as one of "[excessive] precision"; I perceive delimiting significance here as well.

36. It is possible that the poet also signals his departure from conventional neoteric poetics through a deliberate breach of metrical rules. In line 49, word division after the fourth foot trochee (*sublimis | aranea*) constitutes a violation of Hermann's bridge, the only such anomaly in his hexameters and longer elegiac poetry (Poliakoff 248). Callimachus, needless to say, consistently observes Hermann's bridge. The anomaly occurs in such a generally programmatic context that its presence too may be justified on the same grounds.

37. This paradox troubled Ellis: "it seems incredible that he should take so much

trouble to preserve to eternal memory a *disguised* name" (401). Negative implications of the spider image were perceived independently by Hubbard (1984: 33) and Poliakoff; Claus's attempt (241–42) to convert it into a promise of verse is not convincing.

38. Wohlberg, Copley 1957, Vretska 320–21, and Wiseman 1969: 23 n. 1 all believe the brother passage in 68b is a later insertion by Catullus.

39. Feeney (44) identifies this as a "generic displacement" of epic by elegy, but surely tragedy must be involved as well; I would say rather that the poetic tradition itself is disavowed.

40. Ross 1975: 78; Hinds 1–3.

41. The slight evidence for ascribing a mention of Pheneus and its *barathra* to Callimachus is summarized at Tuplin 136–37.

42. E.g., Theophrastus in the fourth century B.C.E. records a flood that subsided the next year (*HP* 3.1.2; cf. 5.4.6); Strabo (389c) reports that the drainage chasms were once blocked by an earthquake; and Pliny (*Nat.* 31.54) states that this had happened no less than five times.

43. At line 142 Kroll objects that *onus* cannot be used as the equivalent of *moles-tia*; Fordyce adds that *tolle* in combination with *onus* "would naturally mean 'take up (the burden).'"

44. Cicero's famous quip against Octavian, *laudandum adulescentem, ornandum, tollendum* ("the young man should be praised, decorated, and extolled/removed"), quoted by D. Brutus at *Fam.* 11.20.1, is the locus classicus.

45. I can offer no solution to the textual crux in 157 or the identity of the person mentioned in 157–58; for recent surveys of efforts to work out these intractable problems, see Papanghelis 1982 and the response to it by A. Allen.

46. Here I depart from Thomson's *domus <ipsa> in qua lusimus et domina*.

47. Witness Aeneas' parting words to his son: *disce, puer, virtutem ex me verumque laborem, / fortunam ex aliis* ("learn manhood and real struggle from me, boy, and good fortune from others," *A.* 12.435–36).

48. Note *felices = felicior, me carior ipso = me uno . . . felicior, vita* (in a metaphorical sense at 68b.155, in a literal sense at 107.8), and *vivere = vivit*; cf. Quinn 1973a: 446.

49. When Ovid, in a letter from Tomis expressly recalling 68a, complains of intellectual sterility and lack of resources, he glosses Catullus' *alere* as "creatively promote, stimulate" (*non hic librorum, per quos inviter alarque, / copia*, "there is no supply of books here, through which I am entertained and nourished," *Tr.* 3.14.37–38).

50. For Simonides' reputation as a poet of lament, see Hor. *Carm.* 2.1.38 (*Ceae . . . munera neniae*).

51. POxy 2327 fr. 1 + 2(a) col. i.5–7, following the text of West 1991–92.

Notes to Conclusion

1. "Indeed, one motivation for the presence of the incest theme in so many poems may well be that it helps the audience to see the essential strength of Catullus' regard for the *domus*" (Nappa 2001: 31).

2. From Schwabe onward, as Wray (54–55) notes, "the best and most sensitive critical accounts of the corpus as a whole have largely been informed by some version of Romantic (or Modernist) plenitude and cohesion, whether in the guise of autobiographical narrative, lyric intensity, Coleridgean 'organicism' or meditative consciousness."

3. As a programmatic ending to the corpus, Holzberg 209–11 convincingly argues, poem 116 is “ein offener Schluß”: in referring back to the preceding Gellius epigrams for the fulfillment of its threats, it implicitly invites a second reading of the poems. Yet in accordance with his metaphor of reading the corpus as a journey of discovery (“Entdeckungsfahrt”), Holzberg imagines the new reading as beginning over again with poem 1. I believe he omits an essential step.

4. Iser would define this stage in the reading process as that of formulating a *gestalt* based upon selective decision making that endows the linguistic signs with order and integrates them into a closed whole (118–25; see above, p. 58).

Notes to Epilogue

1. RE 124; no. 455 (?) in Wiseman 1971: 269. There he is said to be the father of Sex. Teidius Valerius Catullus, suff. 31 C.E. Wiseman subsequently identifies the consul with the moneyer, who then would have attained the office at a relatively late date and after adoption by a Sex. Teidius (1987: 345–46).

2. For an inconvenient princess “two ways of disposal offered,” Syme dryly notes—either seclusion or “an inconspicuous marriage to a tranquil man well on in life” (1982: 64).

3. Rubellius’ great-uncle was a *negotiator* in Africa (Cic. *Fam.* 12.26.1) and thus, Syme assumes, a man of “substance and repute” (1982: 66). One more factor contributing to Rubellius Blandus’ upward mobility may have been his father’s marriage to a Sergia, one of the patrician Sergii (ibid., 67). The parallels between the Rubellii and the Valerii Catulli mount up: both families were engaged in business operations abroad in the mid-first century B.C.E., and both subsequently allied themselves with the Roman aristocracy. For the marriage tie between the Valerii Messallae and the Valerii Catulli, see Syme 1986: 240–41 and Table IX and Wiseman 1993. Hallett 2002: 421–22 suggests that kinship relations may explain Catullus’ patent stylistic influence on the Augustan-era woman poet Sulpicia, herself a niece of M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus (a likely inference from Tib. 3.14.5 = 4.8.5). This, however, is to assume an unattested connection between the families earlier than that hypothesized by Syme and Wiseman, which must be dated to the mid-first century C.E.

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Abbreviated names of ancient authors and works follow the system used in Liddell-Scott-Jones' *Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), and in P. G. W. Glare, ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982). Abbreviated titles of periodicals and standard reference works correspond to those listed in *American Journal of Archaeology* 95 (1991): 4–16; others may be found in *L'Année philologique*.

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